One of the most important contributions the Federation makes to Scottish culture is the promotion of competitions among the younger generation not only in Scotland but internationally. This issue showcases some of that talent and demonstrates clearly that the legacy of our National Bard is in safe hands for the future. The Schools Festivals reflect great credit, not only of the fine work done by the Schools Committee, but also on parents and teachers who willingly put in immense time and effort honing skills and encouraging participation. In the March newsletter I stated that the St Andrew Society of Sarasota was based in Canada but it is, of course, based in Florida and patronised by the Canadian 'snow birds'. Editor

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Secondary Schools Festival

Proud winner of the title Young Burnsian is Troy Barbour representing the Southern Scottish Counties Burns Association.

From the left: Enez Anderson, SVP Glasgow Association of Burns Clubs; Bobby Kane RBWF Junior Vice President; Troy Barbour; RBWF President Jim Thomson; and Deputy Schools Convenor, Patricia Leslie

The world renowned Uddingston-based company Tunnock’s provides vital sponsorship for the schools competitions.

It Was the Charming Month

It was the charming month of May,
When all the flow’rs were fresh and gay,
One morning, by the break of day,
The youthful, charming Chloe,
From peaceful slumber she arose,
Girt on her mantle and her hose,
And o’er the flow’ry mead she goes -----
The youthful, charming Chloe!

Tune: Dainty Davie

by Robert Burns

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2015 Secondary Schools National Festival

The 2015 Secondary Schools National Festival was held on 18 April, an unusually warm and sunny day, and hosted by Glasgow Association of Burns Club. Over 100 competitors travelled from all over Scotland to gather at Hutchesons’ Grammar School in Glasgow.

On behalf of the Schools Committee, Patricia Leslie, opened the festival by introducing RBWF representatives, Jim Thomson, President and Bobby Kane, Junior Vice President.

Enez Anderson, Senior Vice President of the Glasgow Association of Burns Clubs, welcomed everyone to the festival and offered her best wishes to all the competitors.

All through the school the wonderful sound of Burns could be heard in words and music. Performers were given great support and encouragement by the family and friends who accompanied them on the day. The varied programme and overall standard impressed the audience, adjudicators and Burnsians alike.

While the final deliberations were taking place Burnsian Jim Wetherston performed a selection of Scottish songs much to the appreciation of the gathered audience awaiting the final results. The adjudicators admitted the difficulty in choosing winners from the high standard of participants. They offered constructive advice to the performers and encouraged them to continue in their chosen discipline.

Prior to the presentations, President Jim Thomson proposed a Vote of Thanks. He acknowledged the efforts of the Schools Committee, the assistance of the Glasgow Association of Burns Clubs, but, most importantly, the enthusiasm of the competitors and the support of their teachers and families. He hoped they would continue to enjoy the works of our National Bard and looked forward to seeing some of them at future festivals

Patricia Leslie announced the winners from each discipline and Jim Thomson and Bobby Kane were on hand to present medals and trophies.

Pictured above are the individual winners. Verse Speaking: Troy Barbour SSCBA; Instrumental: Catherine Speight, Fife; Singing: Louise Wallace, Fife Association; Bagpiping: Lewis Russell, West Lothian. The team from the Ayrshire Association won the verse speaking and singing section; the Southern Scottish Counties Association won the bagpiping section and the Fife Association won the instrumental section which helped them capture the title as Overall Team winners with most points accrued across all disciplines.

As Young Burnsian Troy will perform at the prestigious Westsound Burns Supper in Glasgow in January 2016.

[Photographs courtesy of Jim Miller]
Schools Choral Festival

Karen Kane organised another highly successful Primary Schools Choral Festival held at Armadale Academy, near Bathgate, on 25th April, with the worthy winners being the choir from Condorrat Primary School, Cumbernauld, North Lanarkshire. In 2\textsuperscript{nd} place were Springfield Primary School, Linlithgow and in 3\textsuperscript{rd} place, Stonehouse Primary School.

RBWF Senior Vice President, Peter Hughes generated great enthusiasm amongst the competitors the children and the audience enjoyed a wonderfully upbeat event. Peter also presented the prizes.

Special thanks to James Miller, the official photographer whose video clips are available to view at:

\texttt{https://www.dropbox.com/sh/fppagww8v68cz04/AAAAxUSWSqJ3hwxoj2-ELrxIa?oref=e&n=172529804}

\textbf{Bust the Ban on the Beastie}

At present Haggis is not allowed to be imported from Scotland into the USA. A ban on beef from the European Union was also in place but has now been lifted and this will provide a much needed boost to that Industry throughout the UK.

There is however a continuing ban on “sheep” products and that effectively rules out Haggis. Although the US Government is beginning a process of consultation with producers and consumers there will still remain in force a ban on certain elements. There exists good knowledge and expertise to re-formulate the Haggis but political will to do so must come soon.

All USA admirers of Haggis (especially the Haggis produced in Scotland and using the finest ingredients) are asked to communicate with their appropriate legislators the need for the ban to be lifted. There is a vast potential for growth in this specialist market which could lead to the creation of many new jobs in Scotland.
The Calgary Burns Club 39th Annual Burns Supper

With an attendance of 667 Members and guests the Calgary Burns Club hosted its 39th Annual Burns Supper at the Telus Convention Centre on January 23, 2015. Dr. Paul Armstrong, the 1st Vice President and organiser of the event, acted as Master of Ceremonies for the first part of the program and, coincidentally, the event fell on his birthday.

The evening was opened with the singing of “O Canada” and “Scots Wha’ Hae” by the Calgary Burns Club Singers (CBCS). John Young recited Burns “A Grace Before Dinner”. One of the unique aspects of the Calgary dinner, we believe, is the introduction of the courses, which are served and then “removed.” Henry Cairney and Jim Hutchens, this year, gave the “removes”. There was a full evening of entertainment including a number of songs by the CBCS including the traditional “Bring on the Whisky and the Haggis” written by Life Member Ron Budd. Club member Gordon McCulloch gave the “Address to the Haggis”.

The Calgary Police Service Pipe Band and Dancers then entertained us. Stephen Nichol gave the “Loyal Toast” and the first segment of the program finished with Ron Pratt (left) providing his rendition, in character, of “Holy Willie’s Prayer.” Club Piper Kyle Scott piped in the Head Table and President Ian Denness assumed the role of Master of Ceremonies and, in his Presidential remarks, highlighted the Club’s activities of the last year, which included the rededication of Calgary’s Robert the Bruce statue with a plaque bearing the words of “Scots Wha’ Hae”.

Leslie Strachan, the RBWF’s American Director, (right) who lives in Bedford, Virginia but was born in Kilmarnock gave the Immortal Memory, which was a subtle blend of humour about his birthplace and history of the bard. The audience was then entertained by an energetic performance of Scottish and contemporary tunes by the Calgary Fiddlers. Tony Grace gave the Toast to the Lasses. The Club’s “Everyready Bunny” Robert Ferrier gave an emotional Toast to Absent Friends and the CBCS sang their rendition of the song “Toast to Absent Friends”. The evening concluded with the company singing “Auld Lang Syne” led by Trevor Ramage.

The Calgary Burns Club will also be very busy hosting the Robert Burns Association North America (RBANA) conference May 29th-31st 2015. RBANA now has an excellent new website where you can find the Spring edition of the Tattler Newsletter. Articles include a full report on Robert Burns The Musical premiered in Aberdeen in January; a history of the Bachelors Club At Tarbolton, where, Kirsteen McCue, recently made history by being the first lady to address the Burns Supper at the club.

More pictures can be found at: www.calgaryburnsclub.com Photographs courtesy of Shannon Duncan (asurphotos@hotmail.com) [Dr. C. P. Armstrong 1st Vice-President Calgary Burns Club]
New Book on Burns by Dr Corey E. Andrews

*The Genius of Scotland: The Cultural Production of Robert Burns, 1785-1834* explores the wide-ranging reception history of Robert Burns by examining the sources of his reputation as the ‘Genius of Scotland’ in the Scottish Enlightenment and beyond. Evaluating his changing stature in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the book investigates the figure of Burns as a ‘cultural production’ that was constructed by warring cultural forces in the literary marketplace. The critical promotion of Burns as the 'Heaven-taught ploughman' greatly influenced his legacy as a labouring-class 'genius' and national icon, both of which relied on blatant censorship and distortion of his biography and works. *The Genius of Scotland* debunks both the hagiographic and vituperative representations of the poet from this period, revealing not only how (and why) he was culturally produced as a national ‘genius' but also how the process continues to influence our understanding of Burns into the present day.


Dr. Corey E. Andrews is the Associate Professor of English, Department of English Youngstown State University, Youngstown, Ohio, USA. Corey has written several books on Burns and several of his articles are available to read on website: [https://youngstown.academia.edu/CoreyAndrews](https://youngstown.academia.edu/CoreyAndrews)

Friends of Ellisland Burns Suppers

The Friends of Ellisland held two Burns Suppers at Ellisland Farm, on 7th and 14th February respectively. On both occasions the haggis was piped in by Callum Watson and addressed by Bill Welsh. At the first supper John Glover M.B.E (far left) delivered an excellent and well-presented Immortal Memory, after which Callum Watson played a lament. An entertaining toast to the lassies by Wyllie McCulloch (far right) was well received, as was the equally entertaining reply by Joan McAlpine M.S.P. (second left). Entertainment was first class; Kieran Nordon set the tone by playing his violin and also played throughout the evening. We were pleased to have singing for us, Leona Evans, always a delight to hear. Curator of Ellisland Farm, Les Byers, gave an excellent rendition of Tam o’ Shanter. Russell Williamson delivered the vote of thanks and the evening was rounded up by the company singing a rousing version of Auld Lang Syne.

Chairman for both suppers was Ronnie Cairns (centre). At the second supper the evening’s proceedings started off by Anne Murdy playing guitar and singing various Burns songs. The Immortal Memory was aptly delivered by David Miller, President of the Southern Scottish Burns Association and followed by the lament piped by Callum Watson. It was a pleasure to have John Caskie sing a selection of Burns songs and Avril Kerr, a favourite at Ellisland, delighted everyone with her recitations. Lee McQueen, no stranger to Ellisland, played an accordion medley. The toast to the lassies was delivered by Callum Watson, Junior Vice President of the Burns Howff club and Jean McMillan-Forster, President of Dumfries Ladies Burns Club No 1, responded. The night would not have been complete without the curator of Ellisland, Les Byers, giving a hilarious version of Holy Willie's prayer. The Secretary of the Friends of Ellisland, Maureen Milton, gave a very comprehensive vote of thanks. Apart from her duties as treasurer, Betty Haining organised and ran a very successful raffle. In the photo from left to right is Jean McMillan-Forster, David Miller, Ronnie Cairns, Halina Cairns and Callum Watson.
Irvine Burns Clubs Win Civic Awards

Each year North Ayrshire Council recognises individuals and organisations who contribute significantly to the community. Irvine Burns Club, in partnership with the Irvine Lasses Burns Club, not only topped the Arts and Culture category, but was also awarded the Provost’s prize as overall winners. President Derek Murdoch of the Irvine Burns Club proudly shows off the awards (left).

The mutual respect held between the two Irvine clubs undoubtedly contributed to this award being achieved.

As a tangible recognition of that co-operation the Irvine Burns Club has presented Irvine Lasses Burns Club with a Friendship Cup to mark the Lasses’ 40th Anniversary. The Cup was presented to Irvine Lasses President Annie Small by Irvine Burns Club President Derek Murdoch at the Lasses AGM in March.

[I’m sure Federation members will be particularly delighted to learn of these awards after the hugely successful hosting of the Federation’s Annual Conference by these two clubs last year. Ed]

Ravenscraig Burns’ Supper – Outstanding Generosity

Ravenscraig Burns Club shared the success – and proceeds – of ‘one of its best ever’ Burns Suppers to boost the works of the National Bard among school children across Scotland.

The committee decided once again to share the proceeds equally between the Robert Burns World Federation and the Lanarkshire Association of Burns Clubs with each organisation receiving £900.

Club treasurer Tommy Brennan said: “This was another excellent response, and I can’t thank our members, supporters and sponsors enough for the way they respond year after year.

“We only hope that this gesture will help keep alive the Burns’ tradition and help ensure our children and grand-children can enjoy the nights that we are enjoying – and we certainly enjoy our Burns’ Suppers at the Ravenscraig Club.”

Ayrshire-based Jim Thomson, President of the World Federation of Burns’ Clubs, said: “My response was one of astonishment: once again the people of Lanarkshire have been extremely generous to the Federation. The money will be used to help fund our annual Scottish schools competition which now includes an art competition: we also now run a competition for students from Russia and Ukraine for essays in English about Robert Burns.”

Patricia Leslie, Immediate Past President of the Lanarkshire Association of Burns’ Clubs, said: “Once again, it’s been a privilege to come to Motherwell and be handed such a valuable cheque. This will go towards the running costs of this year’s Lanarkshire competition which will be held in Clyde Valley High School later this month. There is a growing interest in young people involved with the Burns’ competitions, both in primary and in secondary schools, and this is a feature we are keen to cultivate.”
Talented Youngsters on Song at Thornhill and District Burns Club

On Thursday 5th March 2015 at the Friendship Club Thornhill, the Thornhill and District Burns Club held their annual young entertainers night. The President, Ronnie Cairns made the introductions, then handed over to Sophia Harkness and Helen McVey to introduce the youngsters who each gave performances from recitations, to song and fiddle playing. They were each given a small token of appreciation and a certificate. Later a buffet was laid out for everyone to enjoy. In the photo on the left is Helen McVey, President Ronnie Cairns and at the back right is Sophia Harkness along with the young performers.

New York Caldonian Club Burns Supper

Before we touch on Tartan Week, I have to say how happy I and the rest of the Board members were with the Robert Burns Supper. A BIG time shout-out to Chieftain and Events Coordinator Christy MacPhedran, for pulling this together. The new venue for Burns, Incognito Bistro was magnificent. Thanks to Paulo and Adriana and their staff. The food was wonderful and the feeling in the restaurant was fantastic. No one had any complaints, and that is a first.

Great thanks to Richard Porter who gave the Address to the Haggis, Past Chief Donald Ross who offered the Immortal Memory (with the able assistance of Pipe Major Patrick Duffy, and the members of the New York Scottish Pipes and Drums) and Margaret Kennedy who took it easy on me when she gave the Lasses Response.

Also at the Burns Supper we had the grand unveiling of the new New York Caledonian Club Tartans. Thanks to a team effort, led by Directors Lee Harwell, Kyle Dawson and Gilbert Green. Everyone there was truly impressed by the design. The Board also had a little surprise in store for all those who attended. Each person there got a gift from the Club – a rosette in one of the two new tartans. For further information see website www.nycaledonian.org/newsletter.php [John MacDonald, 80th Chief, New York Caledonian Club]

200th Anniversary of the Laying Foundation Stone at the Burns Mausoleum, Dumfries

The Dumfries Burns Club invite all who would wish to attend the celebratory service which will take place in Dumfries on Sunday the 7th June 2015, to mark the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the laying of the foundation in the iconic Burns Mausoleum. The commemoration will take the form of attendees joining St Michael’s Kirk congregation for Morning Service at 11.00am. Thereafter to the Mausoleum where a rededication of the foundation stone will be presided over by Provincial Grand Lodge of Dumfriesshire.

An opportunity to lay wreaths will be included in this commemoration.
The Victor Murphy Trust was created in memory of Group Captain Victor Murphy of the Royal Air Force who died in 1999 at the age of 79. He played a major role in reconciliation between Britain and Japan following the Second World War and the Trust was set up with the intention of remembering him by nurturing a love for art and culture which could be handed down to the next generation.

The Charitable Trust began in 2006 with the handover to the Trust from Mr. Kozo Hoshino of his personal collection of over 4,000 items. The trust has spent the last 6 years strengthening the Scottish and Japanese area of the collection, and now numbers over 7,000 items. See: http://www.victor.morita.co.uk/

The Scottish collection includes paintings from Scotland’s finest artists over a 300 year period from Allan Ramsay to Dame Elizabeth Blackadder and ceramics from throughout Scotland’s cultural and industrial heritage. One special item is a painting entitled Last Farewell of Robert Burns and Highland Mary by Victorian Master Robert Scott Lauder.

How appropriate then that on the 6th Feb the Trust held a fund-raising Burns Supper. RBWF Past President, Jim Shields, sang songs of Burns and Gordon Jamieson, Hon Sec Edinburgh and District Burns Association recited a selection of poems by Burns and gave a talk about the poet’s life. The event was held in the Trust HQ and a select group of twelve attended including two local councillors. John Ferguson, Trust Project Manager, worked as “chef” with Trust Chairman Kozo Hoshino (centre in photo) beside him in a kitchen! The Chairman passed his sincere thanks to the RBWF for assisting with arranging the speakers and piper and to all who attended this successful fund raising event.

Robert Burns Guild of Poets and Writers

In many Robert Burns Clubs there are talented entertainers including those who can put pen to paper and generate poems and songs. The poetry aspect is of a quality that is beyond my capabilities and it is a pity that so much of it is lost to future generations.

It would be of interest to Club Members and others if the poets within Burns Clubs could be linked together in some way and give a much wider audience an appreciation of the talents which exist. Forming a Robert Burns Guild of Poets and Writers might open up whole new avenues to share the talents of so many people and anyone who wishes to be involved would be most welcome… an e-mail address would be ideal and if you send it to me I will consult others and establish whether this concept could be progressed. Murdomorrison13@blueyonder.co.uk or write to 110 Campbell Street, Wishaw ML2 8 HU

The Great Tam o’ Shanter Reboot

One possible source of material and inspiration for a Guild of Poets and Writers might be found in an e-book due to be available through Amazon in the near future. The Great Tam o’ Shanter Reboot was the title of a poetry competition held in 2012 which invited poets of any standing to compose contemporary versions of Burns’ epic narrative poem. The e-book will feature 21 of the best submissions as judged by an illustrious panel of judges including, Lesley Duncan, Poetry Editor of The Herald; Charles MacLean, Whisky Evangelist; Hugh Lockhart, Trustee of First Scottish; Professor David Purdie, editor of The Burns Encyclopedia; Alan Riach, Professor of Scottish Literature; and, Alexander McCall Smith, novelist who also writes a Foreword. Any profits will be shared between the RBWF and the Soldiers, Sailors and Air Force Association (SSAFA). Frontispiece and illustrations, such as Tam and the Devil Woman pictured, are by fine artist Mengran Tie.
Lanarkshire Association of Burns Clubs Anniversary Lunch

Following the success of last year’s Anniversary Lunch, the Lanarkshire Association of Burns Clubs celebrated the life and works of Robert Burns at their 2nd Anniversary Lunch on 21st February 2015. Vice President, Kay Blair welcomed twenty one members and friends to the celebration. Following a most enjoyable lunch at Cambusnethan Miners Welfare Club, Immediate Past President, Patricia Leslie presented a short tribute to the memory of Robert Burns. In particular, she highlighted several of the women who had been a major influence on Burns from his birth until his untimely death. John Campbell from Fauldhouse and Crofthead Burns Club entertained the company with his energetic performance of Tam o’ Shanter, Murdo Morrison and Tom Donald had everyone laughing as they recounted their favourite funny stories. LABC treasurer, Jim Leslie performed some of his favourite Burns songs and the afternoon came to a close with a hearty rendition of Auld Lang Syne.

Photograph: Standing from left to Right – Jim Minns, Allanton Jolly Beggars Club; Margaret Macdonald, Salsburgh Burns Club; Tom Donald, Salsburgh Burns Club; Helen Morrison, Allanton Jolly Beggars Burns Club; John Campbell, Fauldhouse and Crofthead Burns Club; Eric Budgell, Larkhall Burns Club; Kay Blair, LABC Vice President; George Stephen, Salsburgh Burns Club; Frances Taylor, Larkhall Burns Club; Tom MacDonald, Larkhall Burns Club; Councillor Lesley MacDonald, Larkhall Burns Club; Philip Brown, Kilbryde Burns Club; Patricia Leslie, Kilbryde Burns Club; Jim Leslie, Kilbryde Burns Club; Murdo Morrison, Allanton Jolly Beggars;

Seated from Left to Right- Ena Baird, Salsburgh Burns Club; Mary Muir, Larkhall Burns Club; Lily Budgell, Larkhall Burns Club; Jennifer Brown, Kilbryde Burns Club; John McNab, Kilbryde Burns Club; Wendy McNab, Kilbryde Burns Club.

Mauchline Parish Church Restoration Appeal

In the January newsletter Appeal Coordinator J. G. Torbett wrote an appeal for help to defray some of the cost of replacing the roof and other items of this iconic church in Ayrshire, which has many connections to the Bard, his family, and many friends. The total cost is in excess of £470,000. Grants from various bodies and the Government have been applied for, and have been granted. The work, hopefully will commence later this year. Despite many people raising money from a multitude of schemes there is still a shortfall of some £50,000. If you can help in any way, no matter how small, please visit www.mauchlineparish.org.uk where a facility to donate via Pay Pal is linked to the church restoration account at the RBS in Mauchline.
A Lassie's Love: Music workshops and live performance

On Sunday 24th May from 10:15am - 5.00pm the National Trust for Scotland (NTS) Robert Burns Birthplace Museum (RBBM) has the pleasure of hosting a performance of *A Lassie's Love*, a new composition based on works by Robert Burns, made possible by the support of Creative Scotland and the Jean Armour Burns Trust.

This will be the world premiere of the song cycle and will be performed by Vocali3e, a trio comprising flautist, Louise Burnet, soprano, Emma Versteeg, and pianist, Robin Versteeg. The composer Jennifer Margaret Barker will open with a talk on the composition of the piece. The NTS will also be hosting workshops before the performance for primary, secondary and pre-school children to engage with the craft of composition.

For further information, please contact Rachael North, Community Fundraising on 0131 458 0285 or email: rmorth@nts.org.uk. Full details and online booking are available on the website: [http://www.burnsmuseum.org.uk/](http://www.burnsmuseum.org.uk/)

Further performances will be held at: Drum Castle and Gardens, Aberdeenshire on 30th May at 7.00 pm and Pollok House, Glasgow on 21st June at 7.00 pm.

Poet Entertains Schoolchildren

William Letford, Poet in Residence at Burns House Museum, Kilmarnock, said goodbye to the Museum and Mauchline. His last day was celebrated with a wee event, joined by P6 pupils from Mauchline Primary and invited guests. The pupils helped the poet create a new book of poems and an installation in the museum. The work will be added to East Ayrshire’s museum collections and will be on display soon!

Full details of William’s work with the children can be found at on [http://www.ayrshirecollections.co.uk/robert-burns-blue-bonbons-and-old-washers/](http://www.ayrshirecollections.co.uk/robert-burns-blue-bonbons-and-old-washers/)

William’s work will be on display in the Burns House Museum in time for the Mauchline’s Holy Fair on 23rd May. For further details of the event go to the website: [The Mauchline Holy Fair - What's On Ayrshire](http://www.eastayrshireleisure.com)

Later in the summer William will also appear at our Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect event at Kilmarnock’s Dick Institute (31st July 2015) – ticket and venue information are on [www.eastayrshireleisure.com](http://www.eastayrshireleisure.com). The Residency was organised by East Ayrshire Leisure’s Cultural Development team, and kindly supported by the Museums Association and Scottish Book Trust.

Ukraine School looking for Secondary School Partners

The Junior Robert Burns Club of Ploske is a literary club that meets the fourth Tuesday of most months to discuss the life and works of the 18th century Scottish poet and songwriter Robert Burns. Meetings are free and open to public. Anyone who loves Scotland and its favourite Son and would like to learn more about them is very welcome. The last meeting was particularly significant because we decided to propose a project “Burns Lives” to the registered members of a European Educational platform known as ‘eTwinning’.
Ukraine School (cont’d)

Our plan is the following:

1. To write an article on the subject "Robert Burns. Who is he?"
2. To make a Power Point presentation about places associated with Burns
3. To exchange Burns quizzes
4. To make drawings on Burns poems
5. To translate Burns poems into native languages
6. To make a video (reciting, singing or dramatising Burns poems)
7. To write a letter to Burns
8. To make a Burns card or calendar
9. To document our feelings of the project.

We appeal to all young Burnsians to join our project. The more activities we do, the more alive Burns will become to be loved by all, young and old. He was a great Poet, a Bard, master songwriter, a Man for All Seasons and simply an ordinary lad, Rabbie Burns.

We are working on a project with a Polish school "Penpalling improves English" and with a Lithuanian school on a project "What I like to do" (which is conducted in Russian). We do these projects on e-Twinning and we would like to find a partner school in Scotland. See www.etwinning.net/ for full details

Taisa Khryplyva, a teacher of Ploske Secondary School, Ukraine.

Overseas Schools Competitions

Ukraine:

The essay competition is open to all schools in Ukraine. First: Ivan Ilin, Form 9 School no 56 Kiev; Second: Andriy Mazur, Form 9 School 56, Kiev; Third: Mykola Kurinnyi, Form 10, Secondary School of Ploske (left): Highly Commended: Valeria Budakva, Form 10 also of Ploske (right) with teacher Taisa Khryplyva (centre).

St Petersburg

There were 38 entries. Elizabeth Clark, Chairman, St Petersburg Forum selected ten to pass on to the RBWF which make the final choice.

First: Ksyusha Minkina, School 213; Second: Elizaveta Golovanova, School 157; Third: Pavel Bogomolov School 61; Highly Commended: Julia Kozlova, School 328.

The essays were of a high standard and Gordon Johnston (right) presented a copy of ‘A Wee Kist O’ Verse’ to three young entrants in recognition of their effort. Anifisa Kolenbit, School 43 Maria Movchan School 375 and Anton Islipov School 295. Helen Morrison will pursue hosting the winners during their visit to Scotland in November.

Australia

Paragon: Inspiring Young People Through Music

Paragon is Glasgow-based inclusive music company inspiring people to create and perform their own music. We aim to provide people with additional support needs opportunities to be involved in creative activities on an equal level with non-disabled people and are passionate about using music and the arts to raise people’s aspirations, promoting positive self-image, teamwork, communication and learning.

In January 2015 Paragon ran a wonderful project called Cup O’ Kindness, inspired by the life and works of Robert Burns and intertwined with new music created by everyone involved. This follows our fully staged production of To a Bard performed in Platform Theatre, Easterhouse. As one audience member said: “Another triumph for you and the team! We sang, we laughed and we were moved. Thanks for the Cup O’ Kindness and right guid willie-waught. It matched the warmth and the brilliance of the performance. ”

Paragon Musicians ran a series of workshops in Glasgow with Sense Scotland and Artform with a performance in the Centre for Contemporary Arts on Burns Day itself. A second series of workshops were held in Dumfries with Loch Arthur Community and Dumfries Choral Society and performed as part of the Big Burns Supper – Europe’s largest winter fringe festival.

For more information or if you are interested in getting involved in any of our Burns projects please contact admin@paragon-music.org or 0141 354 0234. For full details see: www.paragon-music.org

Isle of Arran – The Perfect Dram with Haggis

It’s no surprise that the land of Robert Burns remains synonymous with the love of good whisky. The area is home to one of the country’s few remaining independent whisky distillers, Isle of Arran distillery, and the local connection makes it a popular choice of whisky at Burns celebrations.

Established relatively recently in 1995, Isle of Arran Distillers now has a core range of single malts, blends, limited edition bottlings including ‘the Devils Punchbowl’ and a cream liqueur called ‘Arran Gold’. It is their 14-year-old Arran Malt however that Ayrshire whisky expert, Robin Russell, of Robbie’s Drams in Ayr, recommends as a local whisky to serve with haggis. In an area steeped in history about Burns, who himself was fond of a dram, it’s fitting that Isle of Arran Distillers are patrons of the Robert Burns World Federation. In recognition of this and as a toast to the great man himself, the distillers have created a Robert Burns Collection. As a former exciseman in an area famous for its illicit whisky trade, Burns might well have penned an ode to this.