



'The Vision'

The Robert Burns World Federation Newsletter



Issue 48 January 2021

Happy New Year to members and friends alike. January is the month when subscription fees for the Robert Burns World Federation Ltd fall due so it is worth a reminder that the organisation exists to encourage the study of the life and works of Robert Burns 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. Your help in providing financial support through membership fees, donations and fundraising is much appreciated. It is a pleasure as always to include a wide range of articles reflecting an interest in Burns at home and abroad and appealing to all ages.

Editor

In this Issue:

	Page
- Young Burns Ambassador Wins Award	1
- The Legendary Colin Rae Brown	2-3
- Finding Burns Manuscripts Online	3
- 200 Club Draw – Results	4
- Share Your Burns Supper Pictures	4
- Burns and the Saltire	4-5
- Strathearn Burns Cub	5
- Burns Appreciation in Norway	5-6
- History Scotland Online Talk	6
- Robert Burns's Songs for George Thomson	7
- I Sing Burns Songs Too	7-8
- Craig Sharp Memorial Lecture	8
- Federation's First Virtual Burns Supper	9
- First Ambassador Chosen for Federation	9
- Youngsters Shine in Yule Concert	10
- St Petersburg Burns Supper	10
- Tribute to Elizabeth Clark	11
- New Statue at the RBBM	12
- Isle of Arran Whisky Launch	12

The Twa Dogs

There, at Vienna, or Versailles,
He rives his father's auld entail;
Or by Madrid he takes the rout,
To thrum guitars an' fecht wi' nowt;
Or down Italian vista startles,

Whore-hunting amang groves o' myrtles:
Then bowses drumlie German-water,
To mak himsel look fair an' fatter,
An' clear the consequential sorrows,
Love-gifts of Carnival signoras.

For Britain's guid! for her destruction!
Wi' dissipation, feud, an' faction.

Robert Burns

1785

Lockerbie Teenager Wins Prestigious UK-wide Prize



Rose Byers, who volunteers at the Robert Burns Ellisland Trust, was first out of 15 finalists in the awards run by the British Museum and the Marsh Christian Trust celebrating the work and achievements of museum volunteers across the UK.

Rose, who is also an award-winning singer, is youth ambassador for Ellisland Farm near Dumfries which was built to Robert Burns's design and was his first marital home with Jean Armour.

Rose said: "I am so happy to have won this award. It is a huge honour and a lovely surprise! I really am very keen to get other young people interested in Ellisland, which is such an atmospheric place. It's so

Registered Office: 3A John Dickie Street, Kilmarnock
KA1 1HW Company Registration No 196895
Scottish Charity No SC029099 e-mail: admin@rbwf.org.uk
Tel 01563 572469 Website address: www.rbwf.org.uk

Newsletter Editor - Mike Duguid (Literature Convenor)

Email mike.duguid026@gmail.com Tel: 01557
860040

To unsubscribe please email admin@rbwf.org.uk

Rose Byers (cont'd)

Joan McAlpine MSP, chair of the Robert Burns Ellisland Trust, said: "Everyone at Ellisland is so proud of Rose winning this very well-deserved award. Rose runs events at Ellisland, including our fundraising youth concert and has helped promote the site through her wonderful online work during lockdown, most recently her beautiful recording of four love songs from Burns's home at Ellisland which capture perfectly the romance of the site. We are so lucky to have this talented young woman as part of our Ellisland family."

The British Museum and the Marsh Christian Trust have been working in partnership for the 12th year of the 'Volunteers for Museum Learning' award which recognises the hugely important contribution that volunteers make to help museums engage with their visitors. The aim of the 'Volunteers for Museum Learning' award is to recognise those volunteers who engage directly with museum visitors in any capacity. This could involve leading a school group, staffing an information desk, helping with family activities, running a guided tour or any number of other ways in which volunteers provide such excellent support to museum visitors.

The Legendary Colin Rae Brown

2021 sees the 200th Anniversary of the birth of one of the greatest-ever Burnsians, Colin Rae Brown. RBWF Junior Vice-President, Alan D Beck is deeply interested in researching this fellow Greenockian and here he presents the first of a two-part biographical sketch of the great man.

In terms of those who can be regarded as giants in the establishment and development of the Burns Movement, Colin Rae Brown stands alone unrivalled. He was involved in the organisation of the National Burns Demonstration of 1844 as well as being the inspiration for the foundation of the Burns Federation, the Burns Chronicle, the Burns Club of London, the Centenary Celebrations of 1859, the National Monument to Wallace, the statue of Burns on Thames Embankment, the bust of Burns in Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey and, in his final campaign, the statue of Mary Campbell at Dunoon. He is undoubtedly the towering figure of the 19th Century Burns movement.



He was born in Greenock on the 19th of December 1821 to James Brown, a shipmaster and Marion Rae. Brown claimed that Marion's father, Captain James Rae, had known Highland Mary and was buried next to her in the Old West Kirk. Through his paternal grandfather he claimed, not only his Christian name, but also direct descent from the Jacobite general Colin Campbell of Glendaruel. In fact, Brown's own father made preparations to prove his claim to the Glendaruel estate, as next of kin.

Brown's family moved from Greenock to Glasgow in 1829 where he began his professional career, working in a Glasgow mercantile warehouse. In 1842, he formed a connection with a publishing house and undertook the management of a newly opened branch of the business in Greenock. Around this time his love of literature encouraged him to begin contributing his own work to various periodicals and he became well-regarded as a "minor poet". In particular, his 1848 poetry collection, "Lyrics of Sea and Shore" received some very flattering reviews from a number of publications, with the Greenock Advertiser making the point that "very few copies of this Work remain unsold."

It was early in his return to Greenock that Brown became "a sincere disciple of Robert Burns" when he witnessed the grand civic parade which led to the laying of the foundation stone of the monument at Highland Mary's grave, in the town's Old West Kirkyard. This experience stayed with Brown for the rest of his life and it prompted him to become a member of Greenock Burns Club on the 25th of January, 1844. Three months later, and no doubt through the influence of the many masonic members of the club at the time, he also became a member of Lodge Greenock St John's 175.

It was to be less than a year on from joining the Burns Club that Brown became President. This he did twice, in 1845 and 1847, but soon the world of publishing drew him back to Glasgow where, due to the

Colin Rae Brown (cont'd)

government's decision to abolish stamp-duty on newspapers, he established three of his own: the *Bulletin*, the *Scottish Banner* and the *Workman*.

Before leaving Greenock, in September of 1849, Brown married Margaret Park Hall in the town's East Parish, and the couple later had six children: James; Elizabeth; Marion; Colin; Margaret and Thomas.

In Brown's first Immortal Memory in Greenock, he had made a point of emphasising the "stigmas attached" to Scotland in regard to her perceived neglect of the memory of her great figures. The desire to right this wrong was a driving force for Brown. As earlier stated, he was involved in many campaigns for the commemoration of Scots heroes and heroines, but it was through the *Bulletin* that he first began the campaign to build a National Wallace Monument.

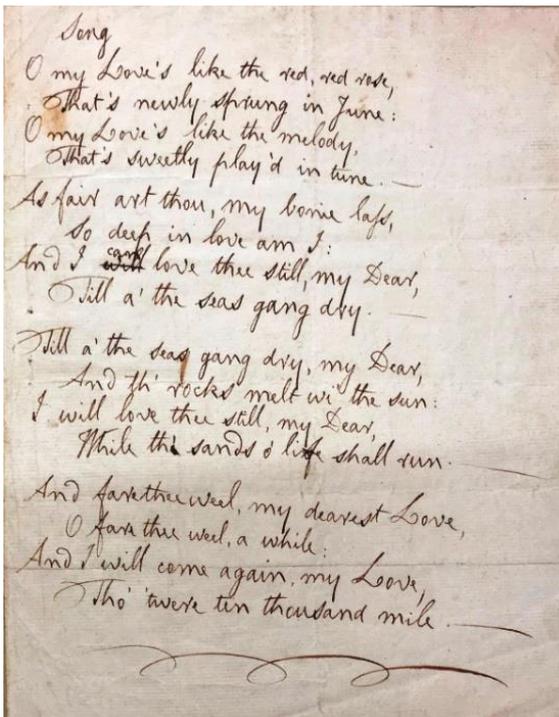
Brown published an appeal in the *Bulletin* to Scots at home and abroad for the support of such a monument on Glasgow Green. He became convener of a committee designed for this purpose and in the course of its proceedings, the committee was alerted to the fact that the Abbey Craig in Stirling had previously been proposed as the perfect site for a monument to Wallace. The committee agreed with this choice and after a public meeting chaired by the Provost, the campaign was launched and the fundraising began.

As the fundraising proceeded, Brown turned his attention back to Burns, and the centenary of his birth. Convinced that the Bard's admirers should "celebrate the approaching Centenary by meetings in every town throughout the kingdom", Brown wrote to each town, city, club or association, (both at home and abroad) "who sincerely adopt as their creed – A man's a man for a' that". It was an open invitation from Brown, as convener of the acting committee, to join the party and celebrate the centenary in one (or more) of the 1,226 Burns suppers which were held during the centenary year. The majority of the events were held in Scotland and the rest of the UK, however the celebrations were truly global, and were not just confined to the Empire: many took place in the United States, and events were also recorded in Denmark, France and Spain.

The Centenary was a spectacular success and meant that when Brown moved to London in 1861, he was in the perfect position to be regarded as the Imperial Capital's "Mr Scotland." [More of Colin Rae Brown in the next newsletter. Ed]

Finding Burns Manuscripts Online

At the end of an excellent lecture organised by the Robert Burns World Federation, Professor Patrick Scott commented that, because of digitization, it is now easier than ever to explore Burns manuscripts, even during lockdown. A video of the lecture can be found on the Federation website at: <http://www.rbwf.org.uk/rbwf-st-andrews-day-lecture/>. The list below gives links to some of the most useful sites he mentions as offering significant online material:



Burns Scotland: 395 manuscripts, including scans of manuscripts previously on the RBBM website:

<http://www.burnsscotland.com/collections/search.aspx?what=Manuscript>

National Library of Scotland

Information about the NLS manuscripts, with some scans:

<https://digital.nls.uk/robert-burns/>

FutureMuseum South West Scotland:

Scans of manuscripts in libraries in Kilmarnock & Dumfries:

<http://futuremuseum.co.uk>

The G. Ross Roy Collection, Univ. of South Carolina

<https://digital.library.sc.edu/collections/the-g-ross-roy-collection-of-burnsiana-scottish-literature/>

In addition, the Burns Libguide at the University of South Carolina has a page about researching the Burns manuscripts:

<https://guides.library.sc.edu/RobertBurns> (use grey tab to "Burns Manuscripts" at the top of the front page).

Burns Manuscripts (Cont'd)

Though originally developed for a course here in 2013, Patrick updates it fairly regularly. In addition to studies of individual manuscripts, the page includes a section about Burns forgeries, the famous Burns forger “Antique” Smith, and recent research at Glasgow on watermarks/paper and on analyzing ink using mass spectrometry. Most of the links on specific topics are to online open-access sources such as the *Burns Chronicle*, *Studies in Scottish Literature*, *Robert Burns Lives!*, and the Centre for Robert Studies blog *Editing Burns for the 20th Century*.

200 Club Draws – September 2020 – December 2020

Date	Prize	Share Number	Winner
Sep - 20	Quarterly Prize	49	Robert Dinwiddie
	1 st Prize	81	Mike Duguid
	2 nd Prize	171	Mauchline Burns Club
Oct - 20	1 st Prize	86	Alex & May Crawley
	2 nd Prize	2	David & Margaret Cook
Nov - 20	1 st Prize	22	Ronnie O'Byrne
	2 nd Prize	4	Brian Keenan
Dec - 20	Quarterly Prize	151	Ron Pratt
	1 st Prize	182	Melvyn McCrostie
	2 nd Prize	167	Mauchline Burns Club

Share Your Burns Supper Pictures



Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, thousands of events around the world—including Burns suppers—are likely to be cancelled or limited this winter. Yet this does not mean Burns Night 2021 has to become a non-event. In fact, we'd like to offer you a unique way to cheer away the gloom whilst sharing Burns's message of universal love and friendship.

Whatever you do around Burns Night 2021—whether you attend a Burns supper or must stay confined at home with a 'dram' of whisky and a plate of haggis—we're **inviting you to share at least one picture of your night on social media using the hashtag #VirtualBurnsNight**. This can be a picture of your meal, of your dress, of a Burns performance, of your family or anything that fits the Burns Night theme. Should you not have access to social media, feel free to email us your picture at arts-burnssupper@glasgow.ac.uk and we will post it for you.

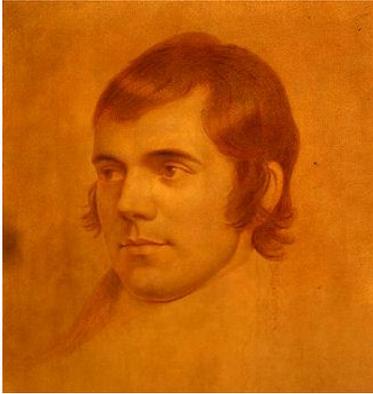
Sharing one picture only takes a few seconds and yet, if enough of us participate, we might just turn Burns Night 2021 into an unprecedented, online, and global feast, fighting the pandemic blues whilst celebrating Burns with images of joy from across the seas.

Robert Burns and the Saltire

The kirkyard at the East Lothian village of Athelstaneford is home of two monuments with important links in Scotland's story. The Saltire Memorial unveiled 55 years ago commemorates adoption of the Cross of St Andrew as Scotland's national flag. The other, is the last resting place of the artist behind one of the most famous images of Robert Burns. Legend has it that the Saltire became Scotland's flag after a battle in 832 AD when an army of Picts and Scots took on opposing forces of Anglo Saxons. Just as defeat loomed for the Picts, their leader King Angus mac Fergus



prayed for divine intervention and saw his army spurred on to victory inspired by the vision of a cross of St Andrew in the blue sky. The story is told in an audio-visual display housed in a 16th century doocot at the rear of the church. At the front the memorial with the battle scene depicted on a granite frieze where the Saltire flies permanently.



The Burns connection is at the other side of the graveyard: the last resting place of Archibald Skirving the artist who painted the famous chalk drawing of Burns (pictured right). His grave is near that of his father Adam – composer of the well-known Jacobite ballad Hey Johnny Cope celebrating the victory of Charles Edward Stuart at the battle of Prestonpans. The doocot and Saltire memorial are looked after by the Scottish Flag Trust, a volunteer-run charity.

On St Andrew's Day the memorial celebrated its 55th anniversary and a worldwide appeal has been launched to raise £100,000 for restoration and renewal projects to develop a new immersive audio-visual experience in the heritage centre telling the story of the Saltire, renovate the battle memorial, improve accessibility to the whole site and investigate the possibility of reversing the years of decay on the Skirving graves to allow their significance to be appreciated by visitors.

You can help keep the saltire flying at the Birthplace of Scotland's flag. To find out more about the project at saltire.scot [Fraser Thompson fraser.thompson@scottishflagtrust.com]

Strathearn Burns Club - First Shoots of Recovery

Towards the end of 2019 the committee of Strathearn Burns Club (Federated as Club No 42 in 1890) made a decision not to host a Burns Supper in 2020 owing to difficulty in raising the numbers required to make "a night of it". Subsequently, we decided to disband the committee and possibly give up on the Burns Club.

However, with the blessing of other members, I took it upon myself to try for some publicity and to see if I could generate interest in the next generation. The local paper The Strathearn Herald was good enough to cover our story over two weeks giving us the centre spread and the Perthshire Advertiser also ran a couple of articles explaining our plight and wishing the one remaining member (myself) the best of wishes.

As a result of those articles enough people with good connections throughout Strathearn came forward to see if we could resurrect the club. Then came Covid and promising progress came to a grinding halt. My wife Elsie who was part of the committee is a joint signatory for bank cheques and with that in mind I have decided that the two of us should sign a cheque and forward our membership fee of £77.00 to the Robert Burns World Federation in Kilmarnock. We sincerely hope we can put a committee together in 2021 and enjoy our continuity with RBWF.

[Gregor McBain]

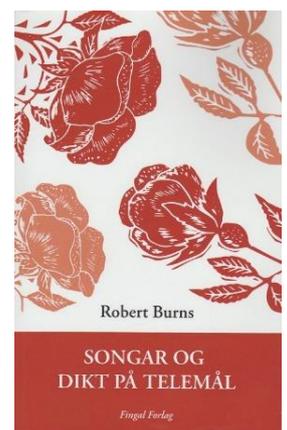
[When I visited New Zealand, during in my Presidential year 2009/10, I was dismayed to learn that the Dunedin Burns Club had been in danger of folding. However, the ebullient Secretary, young Emma Burns, like Gregor at Strathearn, had put an article in the local press and managed to generate renewed interest in the Burns Club, which flourishes to this day.

Ed]

Burns Appreciation in Norway

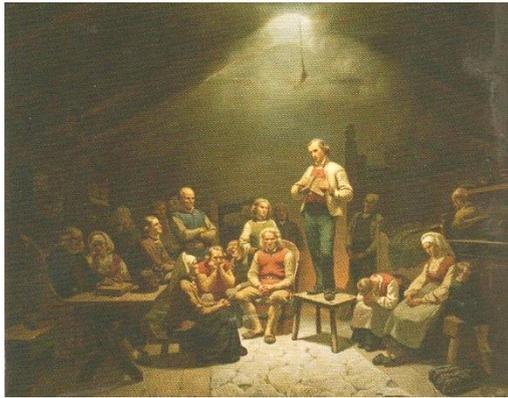
This autumn a new and beautiful Robert Burns translation was published in Norway, translated by Peter Fjågesund (b 1959). He has a PhD degree from Oxford University and is Professor in British literature and culture at the University of South-East Norway in Bø i Telemark. The translation is in the dialect spoken (and written) in his home district of Western Telemark, which is also the most important district for Norwegian traditional folk music. Seek for Seljord on Google Maps, and you will find the area.

Jane Summers recently toured with their own concert using Fjagesund's translations. The singer and leader of the group is Ingebjorg Reinholdt. In Norway there is a close affinity with Scotland's folk music and a folk group featuring Scottish fiddler Sara



Norway (Cont'd)

She can be heard singing a few Burns songs at: <http://www.ingebjorg.no/video/>



Norwegian artist Adolph Tidemand's painting of 1848 entitled *Low Church Devotion* (left) portrays a scene very reminiscent of paintings based on Burns's *A Cottars Saturday Night* with people huddled in a smoke-reeking cottage listening attentively to the words from the bible, in this case delivered by a travelling preacher.

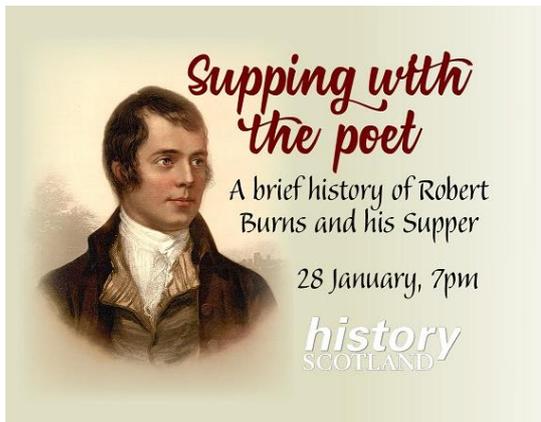
In another painting of 1849 entitled *Old Age Solitude* Tidemand depicts a couple in a softly-lit farmhouse permeated by peaceful tranquility which could easily be based on



Burns's song *John Anderson, My Jo*.

Both paintings serve to illustrate the universal qualities of Burns's works.

History Scotland Online Talk



- Robert Burns talk takes place on **28 January at 7pm**
- Talk presented by **Professor Gerard Carruthers** of the Centre for Robert Burns Studies, University of Glasgow and an authority on Burns
- The online event includes a presentation of the findings from the History of the Burns Supper research project from the Centre for Robert Burns Studies, and attendees will be amongst the first to see the project's new, **interactive Burns Supper global map**.

Following the success of recent online talks on Jacobites and Mary Queen of Scots, the History Scotland team are excited to reveal

details of a special evening session dedicated to Scottish poet and lyricist Rabbin Burns, to coincide with Burns Night 2021.

The event will comprise a 45-minute talk followed by a question-and-answer session, giving history enthusiasts the opportunity to find out more about the celebrated poet whose poetry and writing continues to capture the imagination over 200 years after his death.

History Scotland Editor Rachel Bellerby said: 'We were so pleased to see how popular our first two online lectures were, with hundreds of history enthusiasts coming together to learn more about these fascinating chapters in Scotland's past. Our special Burns talk, in the same week as Burns Night, will be another treat for history enthusiasts, offering an exclusive insight into the Scottish Bard and to the traditions that have formed around his work over the decades.'

Places at the online talk, powered by Zoom, cost £10 each. The live event will not be available as a recording and attendee places are limited. More information and booking details can be found at: www.historyscotland.com/virtual-events/online-lectures

Robert Burns: Poems, Songs and Legacy – Online Course

The hugely successful Glasgow University MOOC 'Robert Burns: Poems, Songs and Legacy', is running again from 25th January 2021. The course is free with options to sign up for other paid courses. Sign-up is open at: <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/robert-burns>

Robert Burns's Songs for George Thomson' - Online Seminar

The Centre for Scottish and Celtic Studies is delighted to present this seminar by Professor Kirsteen McCue. We are pleased to invite all interested parties to attend.

Attendees will be provided the Zoom meeting link to the event immediately after registering.



This, the fourth volume of the new *Oxford Works of Robert Burns*, is the last major output of the AHRC Editing Robert Burns for the 21st Century: Prose & Songs project, the first of the two Burns projects running here at University of Glasgow. It will be published on Burns's birthday - 25th January - 2021. This paper will explain what this project involved for Burns and what role Thomson undertook in editing many of Burns's songs for the first time. Thomson is a controversial figure in Burns studies: he didn't pay Burns and he matched Burns's lyrics with 'fancy' musical settings by

Haydn and Beethoven. But Thomson also played a major part in the afterlife of the poet and it was thanks to him that Burns articulated so much about the creative process of writing, collecting and editing songs.

The speaker, Kirsteen McCue is Professor of Scottish Literature & Song Culture and Co-Director of the Centre for Robert Burns Studies at the University of Glasgow. She has previously edited two volumes of the songs of James Hogg for the Stirling/South Carolina *Collected Works of James Hogg*, has co-edited *Women's Travel Writing in Scotland* (with Pam Perkins) and has published widely on Romantic song culture, most recently 'The Culture of Song' in the new *Oxford Handbook to British Romanticism*. Between 2017 and 2019 she led the RSE Romantic National Song Network.

To register go to: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/george-thomsons-songs-of-burns-webinar-tickets-122947548427>

I sing Burns songs too.....

Serendipity is how I came to meet Eva Francis MacFarlane. If you have ever organised a Club Burns Supper or similar event, and the entertainment phones to say that they can't come, you will know how far your heart can sink. My entertainer, to be fair, said he had found a colleague, Eva, who was coming with her pianist, to take his place. What a find Eva has turned out to be. [Neil McNair Burns Club of London]



She has sung for the Caledonian Society and the Burns Club of London at the outdoor birthday commemoration at Burns statue in Embankment Gardens and Annual Festival Dinner.

Eva has a fantastic mezzo-soprano voice and graduated with a Master of Arts at the Royal Academy of Music having already graduated with a first-class honours degree at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. Eva was a recipient of a Donald Dewar Arts Award and has performed as a concert soloist in huge variety of venues across the UK.

Eva pictured with Burns' great, great, great, great, granddaughter through the line of Anna Park, Janet McNulty, at a lunch in the Caledonian Club.

Where were you brought up?

I was born and raised in a small town called Balmaha by the banks of Loch Lomond, a uniquely beautiful place to spend your childhood.

Did you sing Burns songs at school?

Not particularly - I knew a few of the classics and they would always be around at Burns night, but I didn't know the repertoire nearly as well as I do now!

Can you remember the first Burns song that you sang professionally?

The first time I sang Burns 'professionally' was probably at the Scots Song competition in my first year of undergraduate singing study at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS), Glasgow. I sang 'Ye Banks and

Eva Francis MacFarlane (Cont'd)

Braes' and 'Last May a Braw Wooer' - it was brilliant! I think it is so important for these songs to have a chance to be showcased in an institution like the RCS, so as to give native Scots a chance to explore the repertoire and introduce the international students to our culture!

When and where was the first Burns supper you attended?

I am embarrassed to admit my first proper Burns supper was not until the ripe old age of 21! My singing teacher at the time was hosting a big supper in her hometown, Kippen, and asked me to sing a few songs and duets. This was an amazing experience and offered the opportunity for my dad to hear me sing live, professionally, for the first time, as he lived extremely near!

Which is your favourite Burns song?

It has to be 'Ye Banks and Braes' - not only was this the first Burns song I learnt and performed, but the music and text is just so beautiful and heart wrenching, you can't help but fall in love with it.

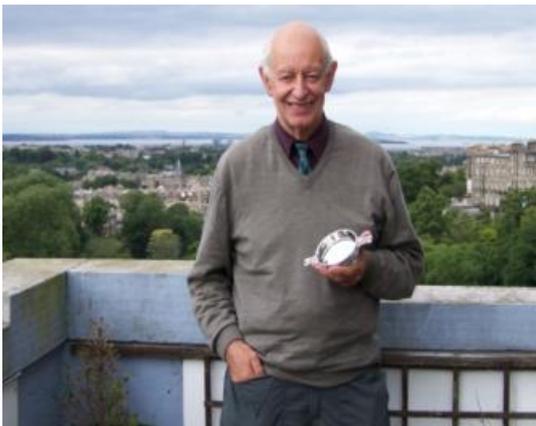
What is your favourite song other than a Burns song?

My favourite composer to sing classically is Sergei Rachmaninoff, the Russian composer. His music is so dramatic and absolutely stunning - it's worth the trouble of learning Russian! My favourite piece of his is 'In the Silent Night'.

**What are you doing professionally now?**

At the minute I unfortunately do not have any professional singing in the works, due to COVID-19 (I'm sure a lot of my colleagues are in similar positions!) however I have found truly rewarding work this year, caring for children with cerebral palsy, epilepsy and blindness. I hope to return to the stage and singing world as soon as I can but, for now, I am happy to be helping children and families.

Eva can be contacted by email: evafmacfarlane@gmail.com

Craig Sharp Memorial Lecture

In 2018, the Centre for Robert Burns Studies hosted the inaugural Craig Sharp Lecture. Held on the Friday closest to St Andrew's Day (30th November), this public event commemorates Craig's association with and support of the work of the Centre in promoting Robert Burns's legacy and continuing to drive research in all aspects of the life, work and times of the bard. As a mark of their equally important work in the public sphere, we co-host the event with the Robert Burns World Federation. His authoritative article ***Born at the Ploughtail – Ploughing and Robert Burns*** appears in 2014 Burns Chronicle.

However, with the Centre being unable to host the lecture in 2020 because of Covid, a video was specially commissioned to mark the importance of Craig's generous gift to the Centre in 2009 of a Kilmarnock edition of Robert Burns's *Poems Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*. Prof Kirsteen McCue, Prof Nigel Leask and Dr Craig Lamont discuss the importance of this book for Burns, and the significance of the particular volume donated by Craig Sharp in the ongoing work of the Centre. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L1LzFCI1bNs&feature=youtu.be>

For a fuller understanding of this remarkable man, known as the 'Father of Sports Science', read his obituary in the Scotsman newspaper: <https://www.scotsman.com/news/obituary-craig-sharp-veterinary-scientist-who-became-father-sports-science-uk-1430788>

Robert Burns World Federation Virtual Burns Supper

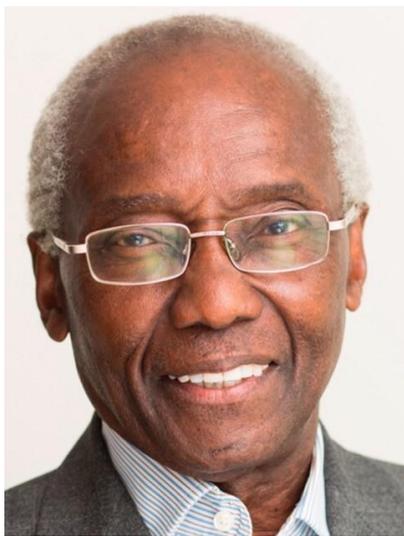
The Robert Burns World Federation have determined not to be stuck in lockdown, but to be brim full of handsel cheer, when we present our first ever virtual Burns Supper. Using the talents of our local and international Directors the speeches, toasts and the entertainment will feature the talent that is rich amongst the Board members.

You are invited to log on with your toasting glass to hand and be ready from the Grace to the commemoration of Auld Lang Syne to participate in this glorious and innovative event. To register contact admin@rbwf.org.uk but remember, places are limited so sign up quickly. A warm welcome is guaranteed.

The President, Marc Sherland, will deliver the Immortal Memory and he promises it will be worthy of the occasion though he has been time limited, so he doesn't go on too much as have all the participants.

It promises to be an evening to savour and we encourage you to not only have your glass and bottle on ready, but also have your haggis, neeps and tatties ready to eat after the haggis is piped in and Addressed.

First Ambassador Appointed for the Robert Burns World Federation



Sir Geoff Palmer is Professor Emeritus at Heriot Watt University. He arrived in London in 1965 from Jamaica, to live in the UK and later undertook his PhD in Brewing. In 1998, he became only the fourth person, to be honoured with the American Society of Brewing Chemists Award of Distinction, considered the "Noble prize" in the world of brewing.

In 2007, the Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade in the British Empire, Professor Geoff Palmer was named among the "100 Great Black Britons," as well as on the 2020 updated list.

In 2018 Sir Geoff was appointed Jamaica's first Honorary Consul to Scotland. More recently he has been appointed to lead the Edinburgh Slavery and Colonialism Legacy Review Group.

Commenting on his appointment, Sir Geoff said "I am immensely proud to be appointed as the first Ambassador of the Robert Burns World Federation. For over 200 years Burns's ideas regarding our 'one humanity' have been promulgated all over the world. Scotland should be rightly proud of his legacy".

Marc Sherland, President of the Robert Burns World Federation said "The appointment of Sir Geoff as our first Ambassador is a landmark in the long history of the Federation. I am proud to enroll him on St Andrew's Day"

Obituary – John Macmillan

John Macmillan, President of The Burns Club of London from 1999-2000, and Honorary President of the Robert Burns World Federation died on Monday 2nd November. Recently John had been in a care home suffering from vascular dementia and there he died peacefully of a stroke. He and his late wife, Betty, were made RBWF Honorary Presidents in recognition of the large amounts they raised for charity through the Construction Trade Contractors Burns Suppers.

First Yule Concert

Sunday the 13th of December, 2013 saw the very first RBWF Yule Concert via Zoom and what an absolutely smashing event it was!

The performances were given by young Burns enthusiasts (aged from 15 to 20) from Scotland, Canada and Russia and included not only songs and recitations but also pipe medleys and fiddle sets. All the performances had been recorded in advance by the talented young folk, and uploaded to the RBWF Dropbox, where they were downloaded and edited by Senior Vice-President, Henry Cairney.



Over 50 members had registered and after a welcome from President Marc Sherland (sporting a rather fetching Santa hat) the event was turned over to Henry (the technical wizard) and Junior Vice-President Alan Beck (the Master of Ceremonies for the evening). It must be noted for posterity that both men were also resplendent in their own Santa hats!

First up was piper Gregor Grierson (left) who played – A Man's A Man/Rantin Rovin Robin/An Eala Bhan, Redondo Beach, and Donald MacLean. Gregor was followed by Liam Kearney, just turned 15, who recited The Rights of Women and The Two-Heided Man.

Sophie Craig (right), who is a previous Robert Burns World Federation National Champion in both singing and in recitation had recorded Ae Fond Kiss and gave us a nice wee introduction from halls of residence in Dundee where she is currently studying. She was followed by Sanquhar's very own Rowan Hastie (below), who recited The Lament of Mary Queen O' Scots. Rose Byers, who sang The Gowden Locks of Anna, followed Rowan and also gave us a super fiddle set, consisting of Ca' The Yowes, A Man's A Man and The Reel of Tullochgorum.



Canadian Scot, Thomas Farquharson, a young piper dressed in the tartan of an officer of the Old 78th Fraser Highlanders, next treated us to a couple of great pipe medleys consisting of A Man's A Man, Amazing Grace, Highland Cathedral, Scotland The Brave and the Rowan Tree. Thomas was followed by two Greenockian – weel kent faces at The Mother Club there: Sophie Bysouth was the first and she gave us beautiful performances of By Yon Castle Wa' and Jockey's Ta'en the Partin Kiss Song. The second Greenockian was Euan McDonald who was very impressive with his lovely versions of Ae Fond Kiss and My Love She's But a Lassie Yet.

To finish the concert, we travelled to the east ... and I don't mean Bathgate! Varvara Ivanova, Julia Makarenko, Alice Dinerstein and Mariana Sharifyanova are pupils at School 61 in St Petersburg Russia. They gave a spirited performance of Rantin Rovin and were followed by Anastasia Grigorievna who recited The Rights of Women. After hearing these girls, it would have come as no surprise to the listeners that their teacher, Frida Zaitseva was recently awarded Teacher of the Year for the whole of Russia.

At the end of the concert, President Marc Sherland gave a vote of thanks to all the performers and wished the audience all the compliments of the season. As previously stated, this excellent event was the first ever Zoom RBWF Yule Concert ... I doubt if it will be the last. [Alan D Beck Junior Vice President]

[All photographs from 2018. Ed]

St Petersburg Burns Supper

Below is a small portion of an Immortal Memory delivered by Vyacheslav Korovkin (Slava) of the St Petersburg Burns Club.

“As in death, so in life, Burns was a man of contradictions: Poet, song collector and tax collector, ardent lover, reluctant farmer, feckless husband and doting father. He was a passionate Scot who felt at home among the English, a man who moved as fluently among the humble folk of his village youth and the urbane elite, just as he did from standard spoken English through Scots dialect to full ‘braid Scots’.



Robert Burns was a lover of life; of women, of nature, of song, of culture, of conviviality, of his country, and of his fellow man. He was at home in any company across all echelons of society. He combined humour, wit and compassion with an innate sense of justice. He could write about mundane daily events, bring them to life and imbue his writing with philosophical wisdom. He was an avid and fearless commentator on the events and people of his day, whether favourable or otherwise. Even the king was not exempt from the wrath of his quill.

Every admirer of the poetic heritage of Robert Burns has the right to choose a theme that is close to him. I'm close to the theme of Love. For many reasons, but above all, because Love will save the World. Let all of Us remember that the love for one's neighbor, the love for man manifested in our everyday life, in our professional activities will help us cope with this attack.” [Photo shows of Slava on right with his wife on left, in middle Svetlana Bukaref, President St Petersburg Robert Burns Club with her husband Alexander]

A tribute to Elizabeth Clark

Robert Burns holds a very dear and special place in the hearts of almost all Russians and his works are taught, promoted and revered throughout the country and never more so in all the schools, colleges and universities in the city of St Petersburg.

Allanton Jolly Beggars Burns Club member Elizabeth Clark, who sadly passed away just recently, did much to establish Burns works with her husband Tom and helped develop, organise, strengthen and widen this Burns connection in all those institutions, more so than anyone else in the last 20 years. She was ably guided and supported in that joyous task with outstanding contributions from Helen Morrison and Kay Blair. A formidable team and, between them, their joint contribution was nothing short of remarkable. These efforts culminated in the founding of the first ever St Petersburg Robert Burns Club earlier this year.

Elizabeth's unselfish devotion to enriching the lives of young Russian students was admirable and helped them to fulfil their dream of visiting Scotland and allowing them to share her home and look after them. More than a hundred youngsters stayed with Tom and Elizabeth over the past 20 years for a life-changing and all-expenses trip and tour of Scotland. She looked after those youngsters as if they were her own. She was also instrumental in establishing aid for teenage cancer clinics in St Petersburg and providing sponsorship for a range of orphanages so that funding for additional English lessons could be provided in order to give them a fighting chance for employment when they left school. Burns would have acknowledged such spirit of compassion and empathy.



The love and affection the students bestowed upon Elizabeth and Tom when they visited Russia each year for the Days of Scotland Festival in St Petersburg was a sheer joy to observe.

Elizabeth Clark Tribute (Cont'd)

Elizabeth, was a quiet, kind, caring and modest women. Blessed with an extremely intelligent and keen mind, she was gracious and dignified. But when she rose to speak, she commanded the utmost attention and respect at any gathering or event whether it was for ten people or a thousand. A truly decent and remarkable human being in every sense of the word. [Peter Pringle Allanton Jolly Beggars Burns Club]

New Statue at Robert Burns Birthplace Museum



The Twa Dogs sculpture was commissioned by the National Trust for Scotland to honour Helen Sayles, as her term as Chair of the NTS Foundation USA came to an end. Many friends came together with the National Trust for Scotland USA to recognise and honour Helen's huge contribution to the Foundation and to Scotland's heritage. Being from Ayrshire, Robert Burns Birthplace Museum and Burns Cottage are properties particularly close to Helen's heart, and to which she and her husband DuWayne have made considerable contributions over the years.

Robert Burns' "The Twa Dogs" is a tale of those who have and those who have not. Artist Sally Matthews has brought

the story of Caesar and Luath to life in bronze sculptures situated on the Poet's Path at the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum in Alloway, Ayrshire, Scotland.

Caesar, the gentleman's dog, is sat on the bench looking down at Luath, even though "nae pride had he". He has a brass collar with a lock and his name engraved on it. Luath is on the ground beneath him, wearing a black collar with his name on it, looking keen and faithful. A life-size bum-clock beetle is on the bench between them.

'Twas in that place o' Scotland's isle,
That bears the name o' auld King Coil,
An' darker gloaming brought the night;
Upon a bonie day in June,
When wearin' thro' the afternoon,
Twa dogs, that were na thrang at hame,
Forgather'd ance upon a time.

By this, the sun was out o' sight,
The bum-clock humm'd wi lazy drone;
The kye stood rowtin i' the loan;
When up they gat an' shook their lugs
Rejoic'd they were na men but dogs;
An each took aff his several way,
Resolv'd to meet some ither day.

Isle of Arran Distillery

In this, their 25th year of production, Federation sponsors, Isle of Arran Distillery is delighted to present its official 25-year-old which now joins their core range for the first time, and will be released in very limited quantities each year. This 25-year-old is truly the jewel in their crown. The whisky has been matured in ex-Sherry and Bourbon Casks and is bottled at 46% Vol without chill filtration or the addition of any colouring.

As one of the first of the new wave of distilleries to reach maturity, this is a proud moment for them to be able to share this landmark Single Malt with us all at the end of what has been a tremendously challenging year for everyone but a very exciting journey that started a quarter of a century ago. They hope that you will join them in sharing a dram of this special Single Malt over these winter months to toast the continued success of their island story.

