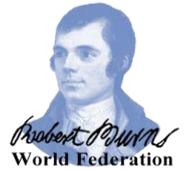




The Robert Burns World Federation Newsletter



Issue 44 May 2020

Normally at this time of year I would be reporting on the Schools Festivals and showing images of smiling youngsters proudly clutching their hard-won trophies and certificates. Both the Primary and Secondary competitions would have taken place in St Athanasius Lifestyles Carluke to reflect one of the most important contributions the Federation makes to Scottish culture is the promotion of competitions among the younger generation. In this issue, therefore I have tried to include articles from, or about, our younger members whose talent deserves recognition. Unfortunately, the issue also carries a number of obituaries of some of the great stalwarts of the Burns movement who rightly deserve to have their various contributions properly recognised. However, there is plenty in the edition to suggest Burnsians are still active and making the most of this challenging situation and looking forward to a resumption of events with renewed vigour. Ed

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New Year's Day 1791– To Mrs Dunlop

Then, is it wise to damp our bliss?
Yes: all such reasonings are amiss!
The voice of Nature loudly cries,
And many a message from the skies,
That something in us never dies;
That on this frail, uncertain state
Hang matters of eternal weight;
That future life in worlds unknown
Must take its hue from this alone,
Whether as heavenly glory bright
Or dark as Misery's woeful night.

by Robert Burns

Past President Bob Dalziel



Robert (Bob) Dalziel died of Covid-19 after a short illness on Sunday 19 April at the age of 74 and will be sadly missed. In his lifetime spent in Motherwell Bob was schooled locally and served his time in Anderson Boyes before moving to Motherwell Burgh Police Force and later Strathclyde Police. On his retirement from the Police, Bob was able to devote much of his time to his lifelong love of the works of Robert Burns. A noted Burns speaker, and member of the Guild of Burns Speakers, Bob was a welcome member of Motherwell United Services Burns Club, Fauldhouse and Crofthead Burns Club and Kilbride Burns Club where he was proud of his Honorary Membership in recognition of his assistance in founding the Club. Bob was also a member of the Lanarkshire Association of Burns Clubs with the

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Past President Bob Dalziel (Cont'd)

pinnacle of his Burns career recognised in 1998/99 with his appointment as President of the Robert Burns World Federation. His commitment to the works of the Bard did not end with his retirement as Bob devoted many further year's excellent service to the School Competition Committee. Bob is survived by his wife Margaret, two sons and their partners plus, the love of his later years, his grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Message on Schools Competitions from the Education Convenor

As the Covid-19 virus started in February, discussions took place with Federation Board members regarding forthcoming meetings and Competitions. A decision required to be made and as quickly as possible; we had to ensure everyone was safe. With a heavy heart, this year's National Schools Competitions had to be cancelled. We had to let everyone know without delay.

This was one of the worst decisions I have had to make, knowing how disappointed our young people would be, not forgetting their parents, guardians and grandparents. Our education committee members and local schools' conveners, all of whom had worked tirelessly throughout the year, would be equally disappointed. In addition, the ASLS (Association of Scottish Literary Studies) have notified me that the essay competition run in conjunction with RBWF for S1 and S2 students will not be taking place this year.

I hope everyone is safe and well and we look forward to resuming our work as normal next year.

[Lesley McDonald Education Convenor]

Russian Adventure for Burns Youth Ambassador Rose Byers

Burns Youth Ambassador Rose Byers from Lockerbie joined members of the St Petersburg forum on a memorable trip to St Petersburg and this is her account of the visit:

"Probably my favourite part about St. Petersburg was the people. When we got off the plane, we were met by a whole group of people who all greeted us with massive hugs as if we had known them for ages. We went to the hotel (which was spectacular) and had dinner.

The next day we embarked on our first trip in the city. We went to St Isaacs Cathedral and were utterly gob smacked by the stunning and intricate architecture and amazing paintings. We then went to the National Library to watch several competitions and presentations. I sang a few songs which was slightly nerve racking! I got to meet up with two of the Russian kids who visited Scotland last year who are also my pen pals which was lovely. I also met a lovely lady called Olga who is a Siege of Leningrad survivor. I am now in contact with her which is nice. We were about to head off to an ice hockey match when we heard that our bus had broken down but one of the organisers took us down in the St. Petersburg underground to get to the match. The underground was amazing! The escalators went very deep down and they were really steep. The ice hockey match itself was fantastic with the fans going crazy. It was such an exhilarating experience and our team eventually won 1-0 in overtime.



The next day was equally amazing! In the morning we went to the Admiral Makharov College for an Artic Convoys Concert and presentation. We were all surprised when the bus pulled into the car park and we were greeted by a long line of cadets. They all helped of us off the bus which was nice. We then put flowers on the Artic Convoys grave and went inside for the concert. Lots of the cadets sang and danced for us which was fabulous. Then, Diana (an artist in our group) presented her paintings to the College in memory of the sailors in the Artic Convoys that lost their lives. Her paintings were mainly based around the sea and the moon. She

Rose Byers Russian Trip (con'td)

had panicked because on the first day her paintings were still in customs but, luckily, they did arrive. We then proceeded to go to the Siege of Leningrad cemetery which was extremely emotional. One of our organisers was a teacher and her students had prepared a very interesting and moving presentation for us. After that we then went back to the hotel for a quick dinner and then headed off to the ballet 'Spartacus' which was dazzling! All the dancers were amazing and there were lots of them that did scary lifts and jumps. There was even a live tiger on stage as well.

The following day, we went to an orphanage where all the children were so adorable and lovely. One little boy loved playing Lego with me and another little girl went around giving everyone hugs all of the time. It was so sweet. I sang a few songs and a man in our group called Alan played his snare drum really loudly which made all of them giggle. We then went to the 'How Well

Do You Know Scotland Competition' where pupils of my age competed to get the chance to go to Scotland as their prize. We met the three winners afterwards and they are now coming to our house for dinner when they visit Scotland. At night time our group split up and we each went to a Russian family for dinner. I went to a girl called Sofia's (who was my age) family with my mum and they took us out to a Georgian restaurant (photo above) We tried all sorts of amazing foods and the drinks were bright green



The next day we went to the fantastic Hermitage. Every room was breath-taking. There was a massive golden peacock that apparently moves about three times every year. We spent most of the morning and didn't even cover half of it, it was so big. *[A bit of an underestimate Rose: it has been calculated that, if you spend a minute at one item and spend 8 hours in the Hermitage daily, it will take you almost 15 years to view all the museum's exhibits. Ed]* We had a Burns supper in the evening which was fabulous; I sat with my pen pals and I got to sing a few songs with Alan accompanying me on drums. My pen pal's mum had never tried haggis before; they thought it was mushrooms but we didn't tell them what it actually was. During the Burns supper the Russian people in the audience got up and sang some Russian songs and at the end all of the Scottish visitors sang Scottish songs and lots of the Russian folk joined in, great fun.

The day after that we visited the Russian museum and then an amazing place called Book Capella where exact reprints of books are made. We had a ceilidh in the evening where we had a lovely meal. I sang there as well which was fun. We were all really sad though because it was our last night spent in St. Petersburg. We all took taxis back to the hotel and then stayed up till really late having drinks in the foyer and discussing about what a thrilling and fantastic time we had. Finally, on our last day we went on a horse and carriage ride through a park. It was absolutely freezing but amazing. We then went to a restaurant for a tasty lunch and finished with a few speeches from people (I made one) and we all sang Auld Lang Syne.



We then headed off to the airport. It was really emotional and sad when we had to say goodbye to all of our friends. Our flights were good on the way back but when I arrived home I burst into tears; I was so sad that our great week was over. I literally feel changed because of that trip. It taught me so much and I met so many lovely people. I really, really, would love to go back next year." [Submitted by Rose Byers]

[Rose has kept herself busy during the lockdown and has recorded several U Tube videos from her parent's farm near Lockerbie. One she composed herself about the coronavirus and sings with her wee brother Seth <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TG4JcnSOkXI>; The second features her playing the fiddle and missing not being able to take part in this year's Schools Festival [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=99vbBaYgYbg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=99vbBaYgYbg;); The next is a fiddle tune for St-Patrick's Day, another joint effort with brother Seth <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBwdmTePihU>; The last is a splendid rendition of the tongue twister 'Mary Mack' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LIPQWNDkBOM> All great fun and heart-warming. Ed]

Annual Conference

It is with great regret that the RBWF Board have come to the conclusion that it is impossible to put on the 2020 Conference safely, both financially and in respect of the lingering after effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Conference Committee have therefore contacted the Glynhill Hotel which has agreed to host the Conference in 2021 and we will give more detail on that as soon as we can.



In respect of RBWF obligations around the AGM, the Board will be issuing clear guidance and advice about our plans in this respect very soon.

Budding Young Singer Gets Kitted Out by Burns Club



Nineteen-year-old, Dunfermline-born, Liam Forrest is a rising young tenor who is currently studying for a BA degree in Music at Aberdeen University. After taking singing lessons, Liam successfully auditioned for the National Youth Choir of Scotland Boys' Choir, with whom he sang for two successive years, performing at concerts in Glasgow, Perth and Northampton. During the next three years, as a pupil at Dunfermline High School, he was to entertain at events ranging from concerts to remembrance services and award ceremonies – capping his plaudits with the school achievement award in his final year and being a chorister at Dunfermline Abbey.

In September 2017, he took part in the Outwith Festival launch of John Cairney's book, 'The Tycoon and The Bard', an appearance which led to an invitation to sing for Dunfermline United Burns Club at their 2018 Burns Supper. His performance proved so successful that he has been invited back in 2019. As a tangible recognition of his talent the Club provided Liam with a full Highland Dress outfit for future performances.

On leaving school, Liam took up a place at Fife College for a year, during which time he studied for his Grade 8 Associated Board Singing Exam and gained a pass with distinction. He is currently a chorister in the choir of St Machar's Cathedral in Aberdeen.



You can view Liam singing in the fantastic spiritual arrangement by Don Besig of Chariot's Comin', sung with his mentor Frances McCafferty during the Dedication Ceremony for the Carnegie Tiffany Window in the Abbey Church of Dunfermline on Monday 12th August 2019 at <https://www.facebook.com/dunfermlineabbey/videos/chariots-comin/2322838464646285/>

[This article is based on the original in the Church of Scotland's magazine 'Life and Work' for which the Editor Lynne McNeil has granted permission. The author, Feature writer Jackie Macadam, has kindly provided the images. Ed]

Erratum

On the page 11 of the March Newsletter reference is made to the piper being Calum Thomson, however the photograph appears to me to be of Calum Watson.

In the January edition, page 8, I mistakenly stated that 'Researching the Life and Times of Robert Burns Club' was the first Facebook club to become federated. However, the RT Burns Club was the first Internet Club to be federated, many years ago, and they also have a Facebook page. Indeed, it is a very active Facebook page where Chief Executive Reg Tait and Founding President Rosemarie Rounce-Rigou are prolific contributors. See <https://en-gb.facebook.com/groups/31125890780/>

Club Research Bears Fruit



The President of the 'Researching the life and Times of Robert Burns Club,' Roger Griffith, delivered 'Power Point' talks on 'Researching Robert Burns' to the members the Ayr Burns Club at the Abbotsford House Hotel and to the Barrmill Jolly Beggars at the Beith Masonic Lodge, with an emphasis on Burns sites in Ayrshire such as 'Poor Uncle Robert's memorial in St Columba's Kirk, Stewarton and on lesser known ones further afield, such as the graves of Gilbert Burns Begg and Elizabeth 'Betty' Burns Thomson and her family at Pollokshaws in Glasgow. Gilbert was Robert Burns's nephew, a son to Isabella Burns and Betty was

Burns's natural daughter with Anna Park. Lively question and answer sessions followed on both occasions with further topics for research highlighted.

Greenock Burns Club Symposium

On 14th of March, just a week before the coronavirus lockdown, The Greenock Burns Club (The Mother Club) held a seminar in the newly-refurbished and award-nominated Watt Institution in Greenock's west-end.



President Alan D Beck, in one of his last duties in the Chair of the ancient club, and in the presence of Lord-Lieutenant Col Peter McCarthy, RBWF IPP Bill Nolan, SVP Marc Sherland and President and Vice-President of Bridgeton Burns Club (respectively Iain T Gordon and Robert Shaw) along with several local councilors, welcomed the many members and non-members to the very well-attended event and thanked everyone for their attendance and for their use of the hand-sanitizers, necessary at the moment due to the spread on the covid-19 virus.

The event began with the unveiling by Club Secretary Margaret Dickson PP, of the new maquette of Robert Burns by HM Sculptor in Ordinary in Scotland, Alexander Stoddart FRSE. President Alan then introduced Mr. Stoddart who spoke with both passion and eloquence of the inspiration and creative process of this new work, which, it is dearly hoped, will one day grace a prominent place in the town as a magnificent 9ft bronze statue on a 10ft stone plinth.



After a Q & A and then some official photographs, the event was turned over to Professor Gerrard Carruthers, Francis Hutcheson Chair of Scottish Literature at the University of Glasgow and a co-Director of the Centre for Robert Burns Studies within the University. Prof Carruthers spoke a little of the CRBS and the poet's connections with Greenock before introducing the first speaker, Prof Kirsteen McCue who gave an absorbing talk on "Songs for George Thomson" - a topic which has been taking up a large amount of her time of late as it is a significant part of the new Oxford University Press Edition of Editing Robert Burns for the 21st Century, currently being published.

After a light lunch of sandwiches, pork pies, pastries ... and more hand-sanitization, Prof Carruthers introduced Kevin Gallagher, a student of the CRBS who is currently undertaking a PhD entitled "Editing Robert Burns in the 19th Century" - the subject of his lecture on the day. Mr. Gallagher discussed "Lines on Stirling" as it appeared in a number of publications in the 19th Century and explained how the political stances of the various editors affected the editing.

Greenock Burns Club Symposium (Cont'd)

Professor Carruthers then gave an in-depth and truly fascinating talk on "Robert Burns in Kirk and State" which is the subject of his new book. In this talk he examined the Great Disruption of 1843 and how its seeds were sewn with the warring factions in the Church of Scotland during Burns' lifetime with particular reference to Burns' view on the matter contained in his writings.

The event was rounded-off with a Vote of Thanks given by SVP Christine Currie to the speakers, the club members and to the Watt Institution, much to the approbation of the assembled Friends of The Poet.

[President Alan Beck]

[A full report on the Greenock Burns Club Annual Supper is available on their website <http://greenockburnsclub.com/2020-annual-celebration/> Ed]

Burns Evening at Country Club of Johannesburg, South Africa

As is our custom with Rotary we like to make the effort to thank people who directly and indirectly help us with our various projects. As this is the biggest project we as a small club (20 members) have tackled, it is indeed heart-warming to receive a letter of acknowledgement from a fellow Scot – Mr Gerald (Mac) Patterson on your behalf to wish us well.



Briefly, to refresh your memory, we are looking to upgrade the Paediatric Burns Unit of Chris Hani Hospital here in Johannesburg (the biggest of its kind in Africa) and with the help of Mac and his friend Dr Bernie Kasten they gave willingly of their time and sponsored the evening.



of Benoni MacTalla Pipe Band.

We have been able to purchase some essential medical equipment and have employed specialist tradesmen to repair and upgrade essential services reducing the infection rate considerably.

This year we again had Mike Murray, the Marquis of Tullibardine, here from the UK and an honorary member of our club. His father is the Duke of Athol and his grandfather, Nick Andrew, is a member of our small club, pictured together. The piper is Clement Zvikonya



[Ron Smith, Project coordinator Chris Hani Project – The Rotary Club of Knights]

Junior Vice President Henry Cairney Musical Tribute Message

A heartfelt tribute Junior Vice President, Henry Cairney, made a film and song dedicated to all the frontline people who have to deal with this very serious global situation on a daily basis. The medical, nursing and care staff, support personnel and all those who are working so hard to look after our health and safety. To those too, who follow the rules at home, making their own very valuable contribution. (To play, double click the MP4 image).



The Brave 2.mp4

[Remember to visit our Website <http://www.rbwf.org.uk/> where you will find more interesting articles on our Sharing Page <http://www.rbwf.org.uk/contact-us/rbwf-sharing-page/>. We invite you to make your own contribution and look forward to receiving songs, poems, images and stories. In these difficult times, it is good to know that we can share a little joy throughout our worldwide Burns' Community. Anne O'Connor RBWF Office Manager]

Helen Waddell Memorial Competition



Alloway, Jock Wilson, Cumbernauld, Peter Pringle Allanton. Front Row (left to right) President of the Robert Burns World Federation and Chief Judge Brian Goldie, Judge and Honorary Allanton Member Jamie Chapman of Wishaw, Judge and Member of Dumfries Ladies No 1, Thornhill and Ellisland Burns Clubs – Isa Hanley. President of Allanton Club Murdo Morrison and the overall winner Jimmy Law of Skelmorlie.

The cold rain and blustery wind outside and the gathering storm about a virus had a minimal effect on the Allanton Jolly Beggars annual competition. The Helen Waddell Memorial 'Addressing the Haggis' event attracted guests and competitors from Alloway in the South to Falkirk in the North. During the interval a buffet was available and then a talented line up of volunteers delivered a top-quality period of entertainment.

Back Row, (left to right) David B Vennar, Glasgow Haggis Club, Jolyn Crawford,

Obituary for Prominent Scot in Victoria

"The Scottish community in Victoria mourns the loss of a William (Bill) Graham on 29th March 2020.

Bill was born, and grew up in Waterside, East Ayrshire, Scotland and after leaving school started work in the local mines. After courting Ann (Ina) Reid for 5 years Bill married her in 1962. When the mines started to close down in the late 1960s, he was offered work in England, however a move South of the border did not appeal, so instead he looked further afield and took advantage of the assisted passage scheme to immigrate to Australia. Bill, wife Ann and three daughters (another 2 daughters were born in Australia) departed Southampton on 18th February 1968 on board the SS Fairstar bound for Melbourne. Bill and Ina maintained their ties to Scotland with regular visits back there to catch up with families and friends.

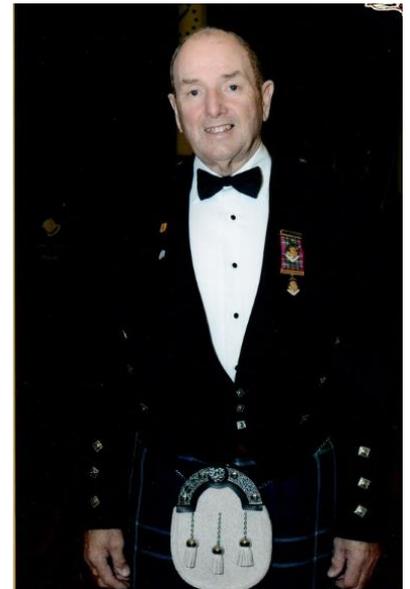
In his adopted Victoria Bill was a very active member of several Scottish organisations including:

The Robert Burns Club of Melbourne (President, assistant Treasurer), Robert Burns Association of the Pacific Rim (founding member & past Treasurer), Victorian Scottish Union (Past President and Past Chief), Brunswick Scottish Society (Past President), Committee member of the Council of Clans, Masonic Lodge (Worshipful Master – 4 times) and, an active supporter of the Celtic Nations events.

He was a true gentleman and will be sadly missed. Our deepest sympathy to Ina and family."

Article submitted by Noel Wright, Secretary of the Robert Burns Club of Melbourne.

[On a trip to Australia in 2010, during my Presidential year, my wife Pat and I were looked after with the most thoughtful hospitality by Bill and Ina in Melbourne. Ed]



Creative Kids in Falkirk

I was asked by the Lord Provost of Falkirk (a former class mate) to judge a competition he had initiated. He had bought a box full of bits and pieces at an auction only to discover it contained three plaster-cast heads of Robert Burns.

These were given to the local High Schools for decoration and I was asked to judge the winning entry. The winners (Larbert High School) received a cheque for £100, a trophy and a framed picture of the poet. The bust was due to feature on the programme for the Lasses Lunch and as an exhibit at the Federation's conference 2020, both sadly now cancelled.

As you can see, the imaginative process encapsulates Scotland's diversity with depictions of Burns' poems on and around the bust from the different colours of the face, the image of the mare from Tam O' Shanter and the rose petals making up the hair.

[Brian Goldie, President of the RBWF]



The Earl of Glencairn Remembered

The Bard's contempt for some aristocrats is evident in poems and songs. In total contrast are the genuine, personal and emotive words describing the fourteenth Earl of Glencairn – the Rt. Hon. James Cunningham.



“The bridegroom may forget the bride,
Was made his wedded wife yestreen,
The monarch may forget the crown,
That on his head an hour has been,
The mother may forget the child,
That smiles sae sweetly on her knee,
But I'll remember thee Glencairn,
And a' that thou hast done for me!”



A personal tribute of admiration and appreciation. The Earl died of consumption at the age of 42 and was buried on the 11th February 1791 in the Falmouth Parish Church Cemetery. A memorial tablet, funded by the Burns Federation, is inside the Church. Another example of where the Bard is remembered at home and abroad. Glencairn never married and never enjoyed good health. In the autumn of 1790 he went to Lisbon in search of relief. He returned, but died soon after landing in Falmouth, hence the location of the memorial tablet.

Memories of Dick Fowler

Many years ago, when I was a pupil in Irvine Royal Academy, I was one of the fortunate scholars who had the blessing of knowing Richard (Dick) Fowler and enjoying many years of his tutelage via the school Burns Club.

In 1990, Dick had advertised for pupils interested in Robert Burns to launch the venture as an after-school activity, and, such was the success, that mere months later, the club formed. This was the only young persons' Burns Club and was indeed duly federated, on the Robert Burns World Federation list of clubs as Irvine Royal Academy No 1090. Dick insisted that this be done with the bare minimum of help from the “adult world.” His opinion was, “*the kids are more than capable of organising this themselves, so let them get on with it.*”



Far from being a small-scale operation, covering only local events, within a short space of time it seemed like we were travelling the length and breadth of the country to attend dinners and functions. In 1995, my

Dick Fowler Remembered (Cont'd)

own last year at Irvine Royal, we had no less than 48 different engagements in a four-month window between January and the end of April. Dick instilled into our thinking, the idea that it made no difference whether the audience were four of your closest friends and family, or four hundred complete strangers. You were being put out there to recite or sing to them, simply because you were good enough to do it.

Dick never sought any personal praise for the success of what began life as merely an after-school Burns Club venture. The occasions when public tribute was paid to him, he could become visibly embarrassed.

In 2018 as I began my two years as President of Killwinning Burns Club, Dick was past President of the Haggis Club, and together with his wife, was involved in a club in Kilmarnock. I had looked forward to "working" with him again, and had him penciled in for a future engagement during my tenure. Unfortunately, this was not to be because he passed away.

On behalf of all of us who are past members of the Irvine Royal Academy Burns Club, I would like to publicly record belated thanks to him for his coaching, his patience, his humour, his knowledge, and for giving up what must amount to thousands of hours of his own time, to unselfishly hand them over to us. He gave us the confidence to believe in ourselves. For me personally, I owe him a great debt which will probably never be fully repaid. [Councillor Scott Gallacher, President: Killwinning Burns Club]

EDBCA Annual Schools' Competition



This year's competition, was again held in St George's School, Edinburgh and, although we had 4 new schools participating for the first time, the actual number of competitors was very similar to 2019, but sadly with a reduction in the entrants for singing, while the verse speaking increased to its highest number for 5 years.

Before announcing the winners, Jim Shields, President EDBCA, introduced Sir Boyd Tunnock to the 160 assembled in the main hall, advising that Tunnocks have generously agreed to a three-year

sponsorship agreement with EDBCA, thus ensuring financial security for this event until 2022.

Sir Boyd, along with RBWF President, Brian Goldie, then went on to present the certificates, the prizes and the trophies, to 1st/2nd/3rd, in each of the disciplines for primary 4/5 and 6/7.

Bridgeton Youngsters Shine Through

I attended the Bridgeton Burns Club schools' concert and award ceremony and were treated to an excellent evening of entertainment. I have to admit, it was one of the best displays of variety and quality I have seen and was particularly encouraged to hear kids as young as five years of age recite, sing and play the works of Burns.

The assembled ranks of the chain gang include, L to R: Ken Dagleish president Glasgow and District Burns Association, Brian Goldie president RBWF, Ian Gordon president Bridgeton BC, Alan Beck president Greenock BC, and Robert Shaw VP Bridgeton BC.



I am reliably informed that the four presidential chains have never been present together at any other point in time. [Brian Goldie President RBWF]

Ellisland Farm Makes the Most of Down Time



Whilst Ellisland has been closed, we've taken the opportunity to do some jobs which are difficult to do when open to the public. This has allowed us to redisplay Cullie's Spence. Set up in the 1990s with scenes from some of Burns' poems, these displays were due for a revamp, not least because the space had become a haven for the not so welcome wildlife. Before the closure, volunteers had worked on taking out the structure, including the double-glazed entrance, leaving the way clear to finish off moving things out whilst the refurb was done.

Thanks to Ronnie Cairns for making the new plinths from timber reclaimed from the old displays. The new displays now tell the story of Burns and farming, starting from his birthplace, moving through farms in Ayrshire and his arrival at Ellisland.

We are pleased to announce that we have secured funding from Wigtown Festival Company to take part in the Spotlit programme. The programme, starting this month, will run for a year and will support each of the local businesses to develop new literary tourism products, engaging with the region's many literary assets from Robert Burns in Dumfries to Dorothy L Sayers in Gatehouse of Fleet.

The project at Ellisland is in partnership with Burns attractions in Dumfries, and its main aim is to signpost visitors to the various sites and help them discover the full 'Burns in Dumfries' story. Given the current lockdown, this project is a vital part of our recovery plan, by delivering a coordinated approach to promoting our fantastic Burns venues. More information about the projects can be found at: <https://www.wigtownbookfestival.com/blog/nine-d-g-businesses>

As part of the Tales and Trails project, artist Henry Cruickshank has been working with young people to design new characters to guide people around the site. Here is a lovely new map of the farm, with Tam the Hare helping show you round. Henry is currently working on some animations to go on the new touchscreen A/V which we hope to have available to visitors when we reopen.

[Sue Hughes Museum Manager]



Past President John Morrison Obituary

We sadly have to report the death of another Past President of the Robert Burns World Federation, John Morrison who held the office in 1993/4. He had a long career in the police before setting up his own business. He took most pride in his family: loving wife Ann, their three children, Ellen, Heather and Andrew, 9 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren. Due to the current restrictions there will be a memorial service and a celebration of his life at some point in the future.

Isle of Arran Distillery – Official Sponsors of RBWF



Both of our Visitor Centres at Lagg & Lochranza are still closed to the public, however our online shop is open and we are dispatching whisky orders. Please note that delivery times are longer than they normally are. Our team is much smaller than usual so we politely request that customers please allow 21-28 days for delivery direct from the island.

Thank you for your patience during these testing times and we hope to be able to welcome visitors back to our beautiful island before too long. See website: <http://www.arranwhisky.com/>

RBWF Marketing Committee and Friendship Tiles



The RBWF Marketing Committee set themselves targets as individuals and as a committee for the sale of RBWF Friendship Tiles. We have had a fantastic start and have already raised significant monies for RBWF Funds and the tiles are on display at RBWF HQ.

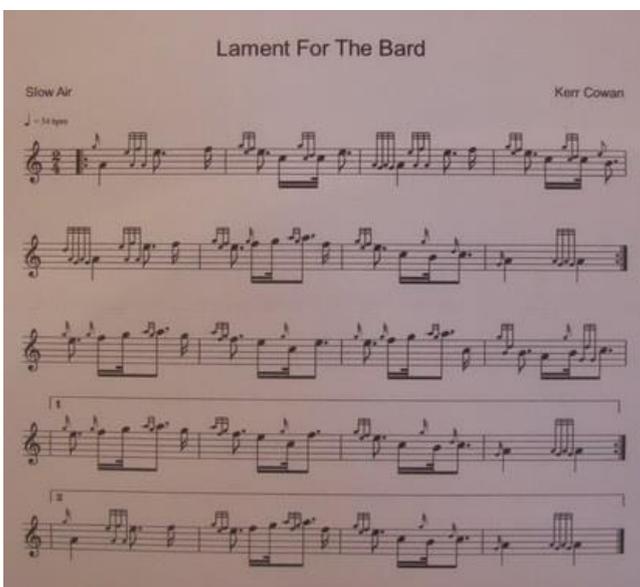
One of our ideas is to encourage all Burns Clubs to purchase a tile to commemorate each of their incoming Presidents. Against that background, we would encourage clubs to order a Friendship Tile for their current President and for subsequent future Presidents. We invite clubs and individuals to complete an application form and send it with a payment of £30 per tile to RBWF Headquarters in Kilmarnock.

The text on the tile is chosen by the purchaser (there is a limit of 16 characters in each of 3 lines). There has been a good response to this initiative and the Federation Board is very grateful to those who have contributed towards the tiles so far because it will allow them to enhance the provision of additional services for the younger generation. Order forms at: <http://www.rbwf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/RBWF-Tile-Form.pdf>

Your support for this initiative would be greatly appreciated. [Peter T Hughes Marketing Convenor]

“Let it Blow” Balerno Burns Club Supper

Under the inimitable, professional, and at times hilarious chairmanship of Iain McSporran QC, the 139th annual supper of ‘Let it Blow’ Burns Club, Balerno, got off to a timely start on Saturday 25th January 2020. A company of 90 cronies gathered for the eagerly awaited event held by the oldest organisation in the Currie and Balerno area. Back in 1881, our first Supper was in Henderson’s Inn (now the “Grey Horse”) but today our home is the much larger hall at Currie Chieftains Rugby Club. Full details of the extensive speakers list can be seen on the club’s website: <https://letitblow.org/>



The haggis was piped in by Pipe Major Kerr Cowan MBE who has been Club Piper to the Balerno Burns Club for a remarkable 42 years. Several years ago, on the demise of Club member Willie Shanks after 63 years of membership, 29 years our Club Bard, Kerr wrote a tune in Willie's memory called "The Bard's Lament." Kerr stated at the time that he was influenced in writing the tune by the feeling he had that the usual laments played at the close of the Immortal Memory, or at other Burns occasions, had no direct link to Burns – tunes like "Flowers o' the Forrest", "Sleep Dearie Sleep" etc; all beautiful tunes, but no direct connection to the Bard, and so the seed was planted for "Lament for the Bard." Perhaps other pipers might like to adopt his tune as a suitable lament at Burns events. [Alex J Hood, Secretary, Balerno Burns Club]

National Trust for Scotland Launches Burns Cottage Refurbishment

Following a successful fundraising campaign which launched in January 2019, the team at Robert Burns Birthplace Museum are pleased that repairs to Burns Cottage can now commence. Caroline Smith, Operations Manager at Robert Burns Birthplace Museum said: ‘Thanks to the generous support of our many donors, work is now underway to repair the cottage.’ Over the next few months, the cottage will have its traditional thatched roof replaced and repairs carried out to chimneys, internal plaster, external harling and limewashing throughout. Exterior works were due to take place from 31 January until April 2020 but will be affected by the current virus situation.

Caroline was there in 2010 when the National Trust for Scotland took over from the Alloway Trustees Group and on the day of the takeover Martin Cassidy hosted a group of children from Alloway Primary School and had them enthralled as he recited *Tam o’ Shanter* beside the old Alloway Kirk.



Robert Burns Association of North America (RBANA) Tatler



In a statement issued by Director Mark Ferguson, one of the organizers of the planned Atlanta conference, wrote; ‘‘We would like to thank all of you who registered to attend and confirm that you may cancel your hotel room bookings at the Georgia Tech Hotel and Conference Center. You will also be receiving a refund for the conference registration fee. If you have any questions, please email us at rbana2020@gmail.com’’ While it was initially thought that the conference might be postponed until September, that option became untenable for a number of reasons. Members are

encouraged to read President Ken Montgomery’s method regarding alternative voting for this year. It is hoped that we may be able to hold the next conference in the Spring of 2021, perhaps in Atlanta.

The Spring edition of the RBANA Tatler showing what’s going on ‘across the pond’ can be found at: <http://www.rbana.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Tattler-Spring-20-32-1.pdf>



KEN SELF-QUARANTING WITH AN ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF MEDICINAL LIQUID. CHEERS - WE WILL SURVIVE!

The message from President Ken is worth repeating: ‘‘So, whereas I am thankful we got through most or all of our 2020 Burns dinners, I am saddened that the 2020 AGM had to be cancelled, and to see what is happening globally. I wish everyone well and urge all to take care and take seriously the precautions suggested by various governments and agencies. We will get through this.

Yours in Burns, Ken Kenneth H. Montgomery President, RBANA’’

[I thought it worthwhile to finish on a lighter note. Ed]