



'The Vision'

The Robert Burns World Federation Newsletter



Issue 51 September 2021

It is wonderful to be able to include an article on a face-to-face annual conference and report on the new office bearers. As part of the drive to enhance the importance of the Federation's headquarters in Kilmarnock the inaugural Killie Burns Summer was a roaring success. The Thomas Tunnock Lifelong Learning Unit is taking shape and will prove to be a wonderful asset for adults and children. One very exciting article relates to the Federation's pivotal role in Burns being posthumously granted his coat of arms by the Lord Lyon.

Editor

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When wild War's deadly Blast was blawn

When wild War's deadly blast was blawn,
And gentle Peace returning,
Wi' mony a sweet babe fatherless,
And mony a widow mourning;
I left the lines and tented field,
Where lang I'd been a lodger,
My humble knapsack a' my wealth,
A poor and honest sodger

For gold the merchant ploughs the main,
The farmer ploughs the manor;
But glory is the sodger's prize,
The sodger's wealth is honor:
The brave poor sodger ne'er despise,
Nor count him as a stranger;
Remember he's his country's stay,
In day and hour of danger.

Burns 1795

New President Inaugurated



The magnificent chain of office for the Robert Burns World Federation has been passed over to the new President, Henry Cairney from Calgary in Canada. Henry becomes only the second President from overseas with Dr Jim Connor from London Ontario having been the first in 1986/87. Henry is an Ayrshire man and went to school in Irvine Royal Academy. Having retired in August 2018 as a Director of Engineering from Suncor Energy in Calgary after 47 years in engineering, with the last 32 years in various management roles, he brings a wealth of organisational skills to the position. He is a Life member of Irvine Burns Club, a member of Medicine Hat Burns Club, President of the Calgary Burns Club and is President of the Robert Burns Association of North America (RBANA). He is also the compiler, publisher and Editor-in chief of the Calgary Burns Club's 'Calgary Clavers' newsletter.

Henry has been married to Shona for the past 48 years, and they have a son and a daughter and 5 grandchildren.

[More detail from the AGM will appear in the November newsletter. **Ed**]

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Senior Vice President Looks to the Future



Stepping up to the role of Senior Vice President is Alan Beck, a professional opera singer. Born in Bellshill, he is a native of Lanarkshire, but since 2004 has made Greenock his home, living there with his wife Polly and sons Adam and Reuben.

He studied at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama (now the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland) and later won the entrance scholarship to the Postgraduate Opera Course at the Royal Northern College of Music. As well as having been principal tenor with various orchestras across Europe, Alan founded the three-tenor group Caladon and has toured across the world performing Burns' songs. He is the a past-President of the Greenock Burns Club and is currently studying for a PhD at Glasgow University examining the early formation of the Burns Movement.

During the past year Alan has also been the membership convenor and as part of the Federation's desire to better understand the views of our members, he conducted a wide-ranging survey which can be used to guide future policy. He is very keen to see the development of the Thomas Tunnock Lifelong Learning Unit in the Federation's HQ building in Kilmarnock as a focal point for adults and children to carry out research and learn more about the life and works of Burns. Alan has been instrumental in driving forward the campaign for Burns to be awarded the coat of arms he had designed for himself but which was never matriculated. Alan's other major contribution has been to recognise the crucial part played by Colin Rae Brown in the formation of the Federation.

New Junior Vice President Elected.

The newly elected Junior Vice President is Neil McNair. Neil's real interest in Burns, apart from the usual exposure at school, was when working in Edinburgh next door to Anchor Close where the Edinburgh edition of Burns's poems were printed. This motivated him to explore other sites associated with the Bard,

On moving to London, he became heavily involved in the activities of the Caledonian Club and also the Caledonian Club of London becoming President in 2007. He later became President of the London Burns Club in 2019-20.

Neil became the Marketing Convenor of the Federation in 2020 and soon played a major part in securing funding for the Thomas Tunnock Lifelong-Learning Unit. He also promoted the idea of appointing RBWF Ambassadors and, importantly, provided them with guidance on what the Federation expected of them in terms of how they could promote the aims of the Federation.

His main aim is to take the RBWF out to the Scottish diaspora and beyond to fulfil our rightful claim of being a truly 'World Federation.'

[You will note all three are proudly sporting the striking new Federation tartan **Ed**].



Burns is Granted His Coat of Arms – At Last!

On the 3rd of March, 1794, Robert Burns wrote to Alexander Cunningham

'I am a bit of a herald, and shall give you, *secundum artem*, my arms:-- On a field azure a holly-bush seeded, proper; in base a shepherd's pipe and crook saltier-wise, also proper, in chief. On a wreath of the colours a woodlark perching on a sprig of bay-tree, proper, for crest. Two mottoes-round the top of the crest, 'Wood-notes wild'; at the bottom of the shield, in the usual place, 'Better a wee bush-than nae bield.' By the shepherd's pipe and crook I do not mean the nonsense of painters of Arcadia, but a *stock and horn* and a club, such as you see at the head of Allan Ramsay in Allan's quarto edition of the *Gentle Shepherd*.'

Clearly, Burns was not only interested in obtaining Arms, but was also interested in the Art and Science of Heraldry itself.

As a heraldic fan myself, I had always felt that it was a great shame that Burns never achieved his Achievement (the heraldic name for the full Arms) and so it was a delight for me when the RBWF's then president and SVP – Marc Sherland and Henry Cairney – accepted my invitation to join the Greenock Burns Club's heraldic Zoom lecture by the Lord Lyon, Dr. Joseph J Morrow ... there was method in my madness!



It would be fair to say that Dr Morrow, himself a fervent Burnsian, dropped quite a few hints about the sad fact that not only had Burns died before he could petition the Lyon Court for a Grant of Arms, but also that no one had petitioned posthumously on his behalf. A brief conversation between Marc, Henry and myself, immediately following the lecture, determined to right that wrong.

I should make it clear that previously Arms, based on Burns's blazon (the heraldic term for the description of Arms) have been granted to the RBWF and, in fact, Burns

Arms had been used (illegally it must be said) by several Burns Clubs for at least the previous 135 years - albeit that they contained slight differences from his original wishes. What we decided to do was to petition for the actual Arms and for them to be awarded to Burns personally. The significance of this is that in the Register of All Public Arms in Scotland (about to attain the grand old age of 350 years) Robert Burns is now legally seen as an honourable gentleman in the Kingdom of Scotland.

Soon after, and with the unanimous support of the Board of Trustees, President Marc Sherland issued an appeal to all RBWF members, offering the opportunity to be a part of this historic event, and, within a matter of weeks, the necessary funds had been raised.

Most interestingly, during the discussion with the Lord Lyon, he mentioned how, due to the extraordinary contribution Burns has made to the nation, he, in his capacity as the supreme arbiter on all questions of heraldry in Scotland, has the sole power to grant special honours to Burns in his Arms. And he has done!

You will see from the photograph of the Grant of Arms that the coat on the shield, the crest and the mottoes are exactly as Burns had described in his letter to Cunningham: he does indeed get the blue background which he asked for, with the holly bush and the pipe and crook thereon. Burns also receives the woodlark on the bay sprig with the two mottoes exactly as he stated, but there are several other additions of honour – usually reserved for the nobility – which the Lord Lyon has graciously granted.

Firstly, only members of the nobility and knights Grand Cross e.g. Knights of the Thistle, receive supporters. These beasts, which stand either side of the shield, are often mythical but the Lord Lyon has granted, on the left (as we look at it) a border collie (representing Luath from The Twa Dogs) and on the opposite side an auld grey mare with scarce a stump (representing ... well you know what that represents!). Secondly, the supporters stand on what is known in heraldry as a compartment: in this case an auld brig over a river (representing the Doon) and on its banks and braes growing on either side are red, red roses and mountain daisies (the eagle-eyed amongst you may also spot a wee mouse there too). But perhaps the greatest honour which the Lord Lyon has awarded in the Arms lies with the banners (or flags) which the supporters hold. Maggie is holding a banner of the Arms as depicted on the shield, but Luath's banner is very special indeed: the National Arms of Scotland. The fact that St Andrew's Saltire has been awarded to

the Achievement of Robert Burns is hugely symbolic, as only the most significant people in Scotland's history have ever been awarded it. In fact, St Andrew's Saltire can be seen on the Arms of Her Majesty the Queen, being held by the Unicorn supporter. In discussion with the Lord Lyon we pondered the best place to show this significant honour. The shield would have been the obvious place ... but Burns was specific about what should be on his shield and although we felt that he would have been deeply honoured to have been awarded the National Arms on that shield, we felt – and the Lord Lyon agreed – that it would have obscured his original wishes. When asked if he would consider granting the National Arms on a banner held by a supporter, Lyon considered the heraldic implications at length – something which he does frequently when he presides over the Lyon Court which is a bona fide Court of Law in the Law of Scotland. He pronounced that he would grant it on the dexter side (Luath's side) as that was the rightful side of honour for the National Arms to be supported.

At the time of writing, a press release is currently being prepared and I would like to include here two quotes from that release: one from the Lord Lyon and the other from one of the most eminent and well-kent Burnsians amongst us ... Professor Gerard Carruthers. I believe these quotes sum it up nicely. Lyon's quote is as follows:

Congratulations to the Robert Burns World Federation for finishing, in our age, a wish that Robert Burns entertained: to have a Coat of Arms. In a letter to a friend Robert Burns stated 'I am a wee bit of a herald' then described the Arms he wanted granted to him. This Grant of Arms is a glimpse of glory into the continuing story of his influence in the garden of Scottish history. I am proud to be the Lord Lyon making this grant and giving this recognition to our Bard as part of the living history of Scotland today.

and Gerry's quote also takes cognisance of the historic significance of the project:

The coat of arms recognises and symbolises the cornerstone position that Robert Burns has occupied in Scotland's national culture. Congratulations to the Burns World Federation in achieving the expression of this profound historical legacy in heraldic depiction.

Finally, I would like to add that it has been a privilege for me to have been involved in realising a life-long ambition: to see Robert Burns being awarded the Arms that he so wanted all those years ago, but it has been an even greater honour to have seen those Arms being bestowed with the significant and symbolic honours which the Lord Lyon has granted ... I think Burns would have been chuffed to bits!

News Flash! The Federation has a limited number of copies of the Arms granted posthumously to Robert Burns by the Lord Lyon King of Arms on sale for the incredible price of only £25. To purchase a copy please supply your name, address, post code, telephone or mobile number and email address.

If you require the item to be posted, please email admin@rbwf.org.uk or call 01563 572469 for the relevant postal costs. Otherwise, pay through your bank by BACS transfer: Sort Code 80-08-53: Account No 00856523: use the Reference ARMS: or by cheque payable to 'The Robert Burns World Federation Ltd'

Please email or post with remittance to: The Robert Burns World Federation Ltd, 3A John Dickie Street, Kilmarnock, Ayrshire, Scotland, KA1 1HW

Camperdown Bites Back

The organisers of the annual Robert Burns Scottish Festival in Camperdown, Australia have had to be very nimble in their planning. Because of Covid restrictions, instead of being a week-long event, the 2021 Festival consisted of a series of strung-out events over the next couple of months, and the program was rebranded as 'Burns Bites.'

Many had to be virtual events which, pleasingly, increased in frequency and sophistication as groups acquired new skills and new connections/friendships. Dr John Menzies from Camperdown writes, "I hope folk will take the opportunity to view, for example, Camperdown's virtual component with contributions from New Zealand, the USA, Tamfest, the Robert Burns World Federation and the Killie Summer Burns Fest. This aspect has been very encouraging for we folk here in distant parts." For details see: <https://camperdownburnsfestival.com.au/>



The Lord Lyon - Reflections on the Bard

My interest in Robert Burns was primarily promoted by two men that I knew. Firstly, my uncle Jack Docherty who lived in Clackmannan and he encouraged me to read some of Burns's poems and talked with great enthusiasm about the concepts that Burns promoted. The other was a Dundee man called Ali Gowans senior whom I heard recite Holy Willie's Prayer and enjoyed it so much I started to study the works for myself. I also, as a young Freemason in Lodge Camperdown number 317, was asked to propose the Immortal Memory in 1982 and I've never looked back since.



Robert Burns reflects much of what my understanding of what it means to be a Scots person today. His works are peppered with pictures of Scottish life both hard and insightful. His themes of equality and fraternity are just as significant today as they were in his own time. He captured not only the type of life handed out to himself but also the sort of values that make a good person better. His poetry tackles some really hard issues such as the tension between the church and community and, in poems like "To an Abandoned Girl," the human emotions of a young pregnant woman awaiting the return of her partner. The values and emotions expressed by Burns are the values and emotions of everyday life and are just as relevant today as they were in his own time.

The verse that resounds most with me is the line "Resolved was I at least try to mend my situation." This early verse reflects his determination to take charge of his own life and to make it better. This is something that has been central to me almost all of my adult life to be able to be responsible for my own actions and to resolve the things that were not right in my life making myself more available to others.

I could go on at great length in this answer but I have to say I still get excited when I hear *Tam o' Shanter* recited as it is one of the most provocative writings for the imagination I have ever read. I've often thought that if I were ever invited to be a guest on Desert Island Discs, when they ask at the end, "besides the Bible, the complete works of Shakespeare which other book would you like to take with you to your desert island? My answer would be quite clear, "keep your complete works of Shakespeare and give me the text of *Tam o' Shanter* by Robert Burns."

I'm sure that the memory of Robert Burns will be alive and kicking in a hundred years' time as his use and capture of the essence of Scotland and its people has gone worldwide through the colonising Scots would have travelled to every part of our world. While things might be done in different ways the concepts captured in the poem "A Man's a Man for all that" stands the test of time as do the fundamental celebrations contained in his works of the humanity of man under the Grace of God. I would hope as I'm sure Robert Burns would that people will continue to promote the celebration of his life through the recitation of his work and having a good time in the execution of a enjoyable Burns Supper.

To understand our present age, it's important to understand where we've come from and I'm sure that the promotion of the works and life of Robert Burns both here in Scotland and with the Scottish diaspora is essential and we should continue to promote the same. I am always delighted to see how even those with no Scottish heritage enjoy the ceremonies and recitations concerning Robert Burns. His messages and his values when stripped down to their essence are of universal value now and for the future here in Scotland and in all parts of the world.

Annual Brow Well Commemorative Service

South Scotland SNP MSP Emma Harper has raised a motion to parliament to congratulate the Dumfries and Galloway Burns Association (DGBA) on the successful 76th anniversary of its annual club gathering at the Brow Well, to commemorate Scotland's National Bard, Robert Burns.

Ms. Harper joined the President of Dumfries & Galloway Burns Association, Fiona Evans, and members of DGBA, as well as the President of the Robert Burns World Federation, Marc Sherland, and the Reverend Moule, along with many Burns Club members and MP and MSPs colleagues at the Brow Well near the village of Ruthwell, to commemorate Robert Burns who died on 21 July 1796, exactly 225 years to the day.

Brow Well (Cont'd)

President Marc Sherland laid a wreath to commemorate Robert Burns at the Brow Well, where Robert Burns took in the iron rich waters, on the advice of his physician, William Maxwell.

This year's Brow Well ceremony, took place in line with COVID-19 guidelines, with a welcome speech from President Fiona and then an oration by Marc Sherland. Tributes were accompanied with songs from Leona Evans, Alan Beck and Willie McRobert on accordion. Howff Club Piper, Callum Watson provided the lament.

Ms. Harper, a past-President of the Dumfries & Galloway Ladies Burns Club, commented;

"I was delighted to attend this very special occasion – the 76th Anniversary of Dumfries and Galloway Burns Association's annual club gathering – to commemorate our National Bard, Robert Burns and I have raised a motion to congratulate the club upon their efforts. Last year I was delighted the club continued with the annual gathering following my suggestion to commemorate Burns by a virtual Brow Well commemoration ceremony online, but it is of course wonderful to be able to be physically present now at the well-known historic Brow Well location. Attendees were able to pay tribute to our national bard face-to-face.

"It was great to see and speak to everyone from local Dumfries and Galloway Burns Association clubs and other Burnsians, many of whom I know from my ongoing membership and Past Presidency of Dumfries Ladies Burns Club No1, and I wish the Dumfries and Galloway Burns Association every success for the future".

Fiona Evans, President of Dumfries & Galloway Burns Association, said;

"As President of Dumfries & Galloway Burns Association, I was delighted to finally be able to welcome everyone in person to our Brow Well ceremony. We came together as friends on 225th anniversary of the death of Robert Burns in 1796, to celebrate the life and honour the death of our beloved Burns.

"Although due to the pandemic we had to cancel our ceremony last year, through 21st century technology and with the expertise of Robertson Wellen and more than 40 volunteers representing every club in our association, every political party and local dignitaries, we managed to share our Brow Well message around the world. However, for me, to be able to welcome everyone in person for the first time as President, was very special. The Brow Well ceremony is a highlight for our region in the Burns calendar."

Highland Mary Commemoration

On the 14th May 1786 at Failford, Robert Burns and Mary Campbell plighted their troth by an exchange of bibles with plans to emigrate to Jamaica later that year. Unfortunately, Mary died of typhoid fever in October of that same year.

On the 14th of May 1921, the Failford monument, commemorating the parting, was dedicated with full Masonic observation. It had been funded by Harland and Wolfe, shipbuilders in Greenock, who had to move Mary's grave there to expand their works.



On the 14th of May 2021, six members of the Mauchline Burns Club gathered to commemorate both events. Over the past year the Club had undertaken a refurbishment of the monument itself as well as painting railings and repairing the approach. An information board will be added in the near future. Funding was largely generated by the Club itself with contributions from individuals and organisations. However, further donations through treasurer Donald Howe would be welcome.

President Alex Crawford laid a large spray of flowers mainly and appropriately, red roses, while Honorary President Ian Lyell delivered

a monologue as if by Mary herself which he had composed. A greater event had been planned but as with everything Covid intervened. It is hoped 14th May 2022 will see a more ambitious event taking place.

Inaugural 'Killie Burns Summer' Goes Down a Treat

Killie Burns Summer festival was an experiment to see if such an idea would work in the town of Kilmarnock where the Robert Burns World Federation is based, and from which Burns's the first edition of 'Poems in the Scottish Dialect' was published. That it proved to be a wonderful evocation of the Burns spirit was down to the flock of volunteers who eagerly signed up for a week and a day of hard work, great fun and anticipation. Because the Covid-19 restrictions were still in place, the programme had to be built around the concept that some events would have to move online or be postponed till a future date, but those aspects that were realised were tremendously successful.

The beating heart of the festival was the Tak a Cup o' Kindness Cafe at HQ (left), with Lorrie Headley as Maitre D', with Jean Abdulrahim as front of house and a team of active waiters and waitresses to serve the public. It was a pleasant surprise when the Cafe made a profit of £1,000, partly due to the contributions of suppliers and the patronage of local Burnsians from the Ayrshire Association, Kilmarnock No 0 and the Kilmarnock Howff Club. Visitors who went on the Kilmarnock Burns Trail, led on alternate days by Jim Thomson, Eric Muir and Archie Chalmers, included members of the Glasgow Haggis Club and Greenock Burns Club. The trail was fascinating and those who participated learnt a great deal about the Burns connections with the town visiting the Burns exhibition at the Dick Institute and finishing at the grave of Tam Sampson in the New Laigh Kirk. Neil McNair even took Robbie Burns (our cardboard cutout) on the tour, posing him at various locations as the tour progressed.



The Thomas Tunnock Lifelong-learning Centre at the HQ was also given a soft opening at the start of the festival with donations of books arriving on an almost daily basis throughout the festival. Although not yet ready for full use, the task group working on the centre have plenty of ideas to take it forward including the

Killie Burns Summer (Cont'd)

recruitment of volunteers to open and offer a place for readers, researchers and eventually school groups who want to study the Bard. Whilst the festival was in action the Centre was used as the base for the selling of tombola tickets, and few who bought tickets went away disappointed. Thanks go to Isabel Lind, Enez Anderson and Eric Budgell who helped with the stall and also Annie Small who helped in hundred and one



ways during the week. Highlights of the week's programme included the online lecture on Burns Statues across the world delivered by Ron Ballantyne in Canada and the musical event Red, Red Rose, which saw stellar performances from Polly Beck, Ian Capstick, Euan Russell and Pauline Vallance. As one attendee, Ken Dalgleish, said to Alan Beck the MC, "The musical talent on show was so good, I would have paid £100 a ticket, for it in London." Poetry demonstrating all the languages of Scotland was on offer at Tapsalteerie with sets presented by Simon Lamb, Tracy Harvie, Jolyn Crawford with Marc Sherland acting as the MC.

He said of the performances, "The audience seemed spellbound by the fast, furious and funny poetry on offer. It is definitely an event to repeat in times to come." On the Saturday Liam Kearney, Young Burnsian of the Year 2019-21, performed outside the 'Celebrate Kilmarnock' offices as did a number of other 'busking' performers. [Photo: performers at the festival with the President, from left Pauline Vallance, Marc Sherland, Liam Kearney and Simon Lamb



Winner of the Burns-Themed Shopfront was Kev's Kards who will receive a certificate and a shield to look after till next year, when we do it again. Kevin Donaldson (pictured) wanted us to mention the fact all the window display had been done by Ainsley. Kev has been trading in Kilmarnock for 35 years. See : [Greeting Cards & Gifts | Kev's Kards Gifts \(square.site\)](#)

At the close of festivities, the overall profit was in excess of £1,400 and the feeling of everyone who attended as guest or helper, was that the festival should be put on again next year when it can only grow in popularity.

Halton Peel Burns Club



The Halton Peel Burns Club in Ontario had a special luncheon on Friday 30th July to honour Ron and Chrys Ballantyne (pictured), Jim Cunningham, and Jim's late wife Jean.

After many years of dedicated service where they have all held the club's executive positions at one time or another – club members Bob and Doreen Ritchie hosted a fine event at their home in Burlington, Ontario.

Halton Peel Club Members took advantage of a fine warm afternoon to say thanks and pay tribute to The Ballantyne's and The Cunningham's for their leadership and

sterling dedication to the Burns family over many years, and not only with Halton Peel Burns Club, as Ron, Chrys, Jim and Jean also made an invaluable contribution to RBANA over many years and arranged several of the RBANA Conferences in Canada and even one in Detroit.

As well as providing fine 'bill or fare' the club also arranged for some video messages to be relayed from USA and Scotland including congratulatory contributions from RBANA President Henry Cairney and RBWF President Marc Sherland.

Wreath-Laying to Commemorate Burns

Many clubs across Scotland and around the world commemorated the death of Burns in 21st July 1796.

Those attended by Federation President Marc Sherland were, clockwise from top left:

Kilmarnock, grave of John Wilson - 31st July; Kilmarnock, Statue of Burns and Wilson - 25th July; Ayr Association of Burns Clubs at Ayr Auld Kirk - 18th July; Paisley Fountain Park - Renfrewshire Association of Burns Clubs - 22nd July



Colin Rae Brown Anniversary Dinner

Greenock Burns Club is delighted to announce that it will be holding a very special dinner in honour of the memory of a very special Burnsian: Colin Rae Brown.

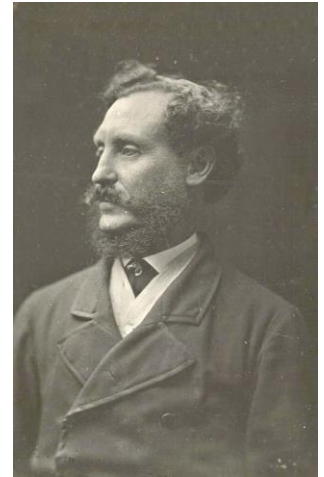
2021 sees the 200th Anniversary of the birth of this great Scot who was the main driving force behind the growth of the Burns Movement during the 19th Century. Brown, who was president of the Greenock Burns Club in 1845 and 1847, was the organiser of the world-wide Burns Centenary Celebrations of 1859, and the originator and main fundraiser of the National Wallace Monument.

He was also the founder and first president of the Burns Club of London and was responsible for the shilling subscription which raised the money for both Burns' statue in Glasgow's George Sq. and his bust in Poets' Corner, Westminster Abbey. Brown also raised funds for the erection of the poet's statue on London's Thames Embankment. However, his greatest achievement was his pivotal role in founding the Robert Burns World Federation Ltd. and the Burns Chronicle, both of which have ensured the continuing and ever-growing fame of our national bard from 1885 until the present day. In his last campaign Brown was the organiser and fund-raiser for the statue in Dunoon, of his great heroine, Highland Mary.

Colin Rae Brown Dinner (Cont'd)

A number of tables have already been taken by sister Burns clubs and societies and you are most welcome to join Greenock Burns Club, The Burns Club of London and the Robert Burns World Federation in Greenock Town Hall at 7pm on Saturday the 13th of November, 2021 for this unique event, celebrating the 200th Anniversary of this giant of the Burns Movement.

Tickets at £30 each are available via Alan Beck, SVP of The Robert Burns World Federation - abeck@rbwf.org.uk - or by private message to the Greenock Burns Club website - <https://www.greenockburnsclub.com/events> - The evening includes a four-course meal, entertainment and speeches from Professor Gerard Carruthers (Chair of Scottish Literature at The University of Glasgow), Dr Clark McGinn (author of *The Burns Supper: A Comprehensive History*) and Henry Cairney, (President of the Robert Burns World Federation).



The dinner is open to all.

Federation's New Ambassador Appointed



A scientist, Scotch whisky distiller, businessman and Burnsian has been appointed as an ambassador of the Robert Burns World Federation.

Well-known in his native Dumfries and Galloway as the owner of Annandale Distillery, and The Globe Inn – Robert Burns' "favourite howff" – in Dumfries, Professor David Thomson's career in science and research has taken him all over the world.

He is the founder and president of MMR Research Group, one of the world's largest independent market research organisations, which

employs more than 600 people across 10 countries. A visiting professor in the School of Chemistry, Food and Pharmacy at the University of Reading, he has also published papers on sensory science, conceptualisation and emotion during his academic career.

In addition to these career achievements, Thomson and his wife and business partner, Teresa Church, bought Annandale Distillery in 2007, saving and transforming it into a five-star attraction producing single cask single malt Scotch Whisky. They describe themselves as being "custodians" of the distillery and The Globe Inn.

The couple reportedly loved Robert Burns' world-famous "favourite howff" so much that in 2018 they bought it, to preserve the historic landmark so future generations can experience it. A lifelong Burns enthusiast, Thomson said: "The reason we bought The Globe was undoubtedly to preserve the Burns Rooms and to secure them for posterity. The Globe Inn is an historical treasure." The Burns Rooms have been restored to let visitors understand the history of the place and the spirit of the Bard.

As an ambassador for the Robert Burns World Federation, Thomson is looking forward to working with Burns enthusiasts all over the world to promote the life and legacy, poetry and works of Robert Burns.

"Robert Burns is a true Scottish icon whose influence reaches out across the globe," he said.

[I am very grateful to the Editor Callum Baird of the National Newspaper for permission to reproduce the article which featured in the 23rd August edition. **Ed**]

Tamfest 2021



'Tamfest' is inspired by Robert Burns most epic of poems Tam o' Shanter. One of the main events this year will include the fascinating stories behind world-famous Scottish artist Alexander Goudie's series of 54 paintings illustrating both the supernatural and comic aspects of Robert Burns' poem, narrated by his son, Lachlan Goudie, a distinguished artist and presenter in his own right! This unique film is shot amongst Ayrshire's most evocative locations which gave birth to the iconic poem.

This event will be accompanied by exclusive live performances from a world-famous venue in Ayr with one of Scotland's most popular musicians Eddi Reader and Cameron Nixon, finalist in the BBC young traditional musician of the year 2020.

Ayrshire is known for its colourful history and characters and seeped in fascinating tales, urban legends and more! There will be four Tales with Tam on 9th, 17th, 23rd and 30th of October. All the tales will be shown on [Tamfest Facebook](#).

For a full programme of events see: <https://tamfest.co.uk/events/>



Kids Are Well Versed in Burns Tradition



Pupils at two Primary Schools helped Irvine keep a special tradition alive this year. For the past 40-plus years, the Burns Club's annual verse-speaking competition has been among the eagerly awaited events within the calendar of Irvine's Primaries.

Although this year's event couldn't go ahead as normal because of Covid – 19, two local Primary schools, Glebe and Woodlands, pulled out all the stops to ensure their young people didn't miss out. Bill McGregor, the Burns Club's Education Director was delighted by the initiative shown by the school's in organising their own in-house competitions. As he explained, "It spoke volumes for their enthusiasm but, at the same time, he understood completely why different pressures and uncertainties prevented other schools from doing likewise.

The Glebe Primary winners Lauren Wyllie (left) and Hattie McClory are shown with their quachis and certificates. Winners from Woodland PS were Katie McCubbin (P2) and Isla Hobson (P3) with Isobel Dunlop and Louise Boyd each winning the P4-P7 section.

Many children have used the competition as a stepping stone to greater things with this local introduction not only to the works of Robert Burns and other Scottish writers but also as an opportunity to make their first appearance in front of an audience.



Robert Burns Humanitarian Award - 2022 Nominations Open

The Robert Burns Humanitarian Award (RBHA), supported by South Ayrshire Council, recognises courage, commitment, inspiration and hands-on humanitarian efforts from people of any nationality, race, age or gender.

We are looking for nominations for those who have saved, improved or enriched the lives of others or society as a whole, through personal self-sacrifice, selfless service or direct humanitarian work. It doesn't have to be someone you know; it could be someone you've read about, someone you've seen on TV, or someone you've long admired.

Our Current winner, Mark Williamson is the founder of 'Sweet for Addicts' a theatre group which helps those battling addiction. Sweet for Addicts is a non-profit recovery-based theatre group based in Glasgow, which was formed by Mark in 2006 and has since worked with hundreds of people as they journey their way out of addiction. Everyone who performs with Sweet for Addicts has a connection with addiction, whether person or through, a loved one, friend, acquaintance or family member.

Mark does not hold auditions, but instead offers everyone the opportunity to be involved in a positive way. Whether that's choosing to go on stage or to play an important role through backstage operations.

Since 2006, Mark has taken Sweet for Addicts to venues throughout Scotland to perform more than 20 plays, many of which he has written or directed.

As well as gaining the prestigious RBHA 2022 title, the winner will receive the equivalent of 1759 guineas (approximately £1,800). This sum signifies the year of the Bard's birth and the coinage in circulation at the time.

Councillor Peter Henderson, Chair of the RBHA judging panel, said: "Robert Burns was passionate about making a difference and championed equality for all. The Robert Burns Humanitarian Award allows us to recognise the efforts of people who want to change lives for the better. This prestigious award acknowledges those who are fervent about their beliefs and strive to make positive changes, and I'd encourage you to take this opportunity to recognise these individuals."

Nominations for the RBHA 2021 can be made online at www.robertburnsaward.com until Monday 27 September 2021, 4pm. The 2021 RBHA winner will be announced on Tuesday 25 January 2022

Isle of Arran Distillery – Special Editions



In September RBWF sponsors, Isle of Arran Distilleries, will be launching their 'Rare Batch' bottlings for the first time. The extremely rare oak casks in this bottling were sourced from the Argonne Forest in the north-east of France. They were previously used to mature still wines from a traditional winemaker based near the village of Ay. Both editions are 15 Years old and bottled cask strength.

The Arran Harmony Edition Vol. 4 is an exclusive bottling now available for sale from the Visitor Centre and web shop. This special annual bottling was prepared to celebrate the Annual Arran

Festival Malt & Music which took place online this year. It has been skillfully blended using Arran Single Malt matured in three distinctive types of cask: ex-Sherry Hogshead, ex-Red Wine French Oak and ex-Port Pipe. The resulting whisky is intriguing, individual and perfectly balanced, demonstrating the skill of the Master Distiller who presents every Arran Single Malt as a masterpiece.

