This newsletter reports on many Burns Suppers from far and wide reflecting participation by young and old alike. It is particularly gratifying to report on events from South Africa, Japan, Russia, Canada, Australia and the USA, yet again demonstrating the worldwide appeal of our National Bard. Of particular interest is the inaugural ‘Rabbie Burns Plate’ horse race at Camperdown racetrack, an event which hopefully will grow in stature in future and strengthen the bonds between Scotland and the town of Camperdown which proudly possesses the oldest statue of Burns in the world. Such has been the volume of articles reporting Burns Suppers that some submissions have had to be held over until next month’s newsletter or, unfortunately in some cases, left on the cutting floor, for which I apologise.

Ed

In this Issue:
- Burns Supper in Scottish Parliament 1
- Camperdown - Burns Horse Race 2
- Wreath-laying Ceremony in Aberdeen 2
- Wreath-laying Ceremony in Glasgow 3
- St Peters burg Art Competition Winners 4
- Largs Cronies Burns Supper 4
- Cape Town Burns Supper 5
- Obituary – Ronnie Jack 5
- Calgary Burns Supper 6
- Burns in Tamil Language 7
- Inverness Burns Club Supper 7
- St Michael’s Commemoration 8
- Falkirk Burns Suppers 8-9
- Burns Celebration in Japan 9
- Dumfries Howff Club Supper 10
- Logangate and Helensburgh Suppers 11-12
- Atlanta Burns Club Supper 12

Burns Supper in the Scottish Parliament

Cameron Kerr, from Ayr, had the honour of delivering the ‘Address to the Haggis’ at the Consular Corps’ Burns Supper held in the Scottish Parliament on 25 January and hosted by the Presiding Officer Ken Macintosh. Cameron has been a winner at the Robert Burns World Federation’s National Festivals on a few occasions. He was invited as a guest performer in St Petersburg in January 2016 as part of the visit by members of the St Petersburg Forum, a charity which fosters links between Scotland and the city.

Cameron enjoyed chatting with the politicians and consular staff and his parents also really enjoyed the experience and were delighted that Cameron had been afforded this opportunity of reciting Burns’ poetry.

Answer to the Guidwife of Wauchope House

But still the elements o’ sang
In formless jumble, right an’ wrang,
Wild floated in my brain;
Till on that hairst I said before,
My partner in the merry core,
She rous’d the forming strain,
I see her yet, the sonsie quean
That lighted up my jingle,
Her witching smile, her pauky een
That gart my heartstrings tingle!
I firèd, inspirèd,
At ev’ry kindling keek,
But, hashing and dashing,
I fearèd ay’ to speak.

Robert Burns

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Camperdown January 2017: the Rabbie Burns Memorial Plate

In south-western Victoria – of a’ the airts the wind is inclined to blaw – most people dearly love its south-westerly flows especially during summer for those are the winds that are laced with cool, moist air from the Southern Ocean; the air that pulls in rain-bearing clouds which underwrite the district’s agricultural and pastoral prosperity, as Camperdown’s pioneering Scots well-realised from the moment they began settling there in the 1840s.

By the 1860s Camperdown had achieved a reputation for the fineness of its horses as well as the quality of its sheep and cattle. In 1866 a section of the township common was chosen by the fledgling Hampden Racing Club as the site for a racecourse. The first race meeting was held on New Year’s Day 1867.

With much dedicated work over many decades, initially by Hampden Racing Club, then by its successor the Camperdown Turf Club, this country racecourse with its old-world grandstand – now heritage-listed – has become a prized facility exuding an ambience to savour.

Sixteen years after the first race meeting on the township common, Scottish settler William Taylor shipped what we now know to be the oldest surviving statue of Robert Burns from Leith to Camperdown’s public park, situated above two exquisite crater lakes on the town’s western outskirts. There is thus something quite fitting that the inaugural “Rabbie Burns Plate” was run in Camperdown on the 150th anniversary of the original race meeting in January 1867.

On 14 January 2017, in cool, blustery conditions that buffeted coiffured ladies and sent their hats – and many of the men’s, too – flying high, 14 flighty thoroughbreds were coaxed into the starting stalls at the 1400-metre post. By 2.15pm they were thundering down the straight. The winner, in just over 82 seconds, was “I Am Ruben” - whose name, over the public address system sounded just like “I Am Robin” – as in Rantin’ Rovin’ Robin!

A vivid imagination might credit both jockey Tom Sadler and his horse for doing their best to make sure everyone got the message –Camperdown is indeed an iconic spot in the world of Burns!

The annual Robert Burns Festival will be held in Camperdown 19 to 21 May, 2017. [Gordon Ashley]

Wreath Laying. Union Terrace Aberdeen, Sunday 22 January 2017

Piper John Gauld commenced proceedings with a lively rendition of some of Burns’ tunes. Aberdeen Club President, Mrs Beth Pratt, gave a short eulogy & jointly with Lord Provost George Adam, laid a wreath.

Piper John led the assembled crowd directly across Union Terrace to the Caledonian Hotel for a welcome cup of tea, coffee & shortbread, a guid blether and a poem fae past Secretary, Charlie Beaton.

The bronze statue by Henry Bain Smith (1857-1893) was cast in July 1892 and unveiled two months later. The daisy held by the national bard (which has sometimes been a target for minor mischief makers Ed) recalls his popular poem “To a Mountain Daisy,” written at the plough in April 1786.
Wreath Laying Ceremony - Glasgow

On 21st January 2017 at 11:30, in bright sunlight, members and supporters of the Glasgow and District Burns Association, and its constituent Burns Clubs, the Jean Armour Burns Trust and others, gathered to place wreaths at the statue of Robert Burns in George Square in Glasgow. Baillie Marie Garrity, attended on behalf of Glasgow City Council, speaking stirringly on behalf of the city, and afterwards laying a wreath.

Within the loggia of the City Chambers, President Enez Anderson, gave a fervent address about the value she places on the wreath laying event, the opportunity it presents to show Glasgow citizens, and tourists visiting the city, the high esteem offered to our National Bard, Robert Burns, over 250 years since his birth. Marc Sherland then read out the long list of clubs who had sent fraternal greetings to the Association and President of the Robert Burns World Federation, Bobby Kane added his greetings and those from across the world. Afterwards, under the gleeful gaze of the bust of Nelson Mandela, the children from John Paul II’s Primary School entertained the assembly with songs from the Burns repertoire.

The group was led to the statue in George Square, by Douglas Melvin, the Association’s piper. Wreaths were laid at the foot of the statue. Enez then addressed the young people of the choir, before they once again sang. All agreed their singing was a delight, drawn from primary 5-7 of the school. Three cheers in commemoration of the Bard, resounded from all standing nearby to close this part of the event.

Dougie Melvin piped the group from the Square, and once in the warmer location of Merchants House, light refreshments were available and the school choir completed their performance, accompanied by Mr. Gordon Gunnee on the grand piano. A most memorable thrill was a fine selection of soloists, Connor McAulay, Amy Bennett and Kip Logan, who did themselves proud with voice, cello and song respectively.

It is to the credit of Glasgow City, that it continues to support this heritage event. The Burns statue in George Square has long been associated with the G&DBA since in the 80s they sponsored its upkeep and maintenance. The statue was first erected in 1877 and was designed by George Edwin Ewing. At its unveiling over 10,000 people assembled to participate and cheer. The Association did not draw this number to the event, but it was notable how many passers-by stopped to join the assembly and some asked questions about the ceremony and expressed their appreciation of the organisers.

For more on G&DBA activities see:  https://www.facebook.com/groups/GlasDistBurnsAssoc/
St Petersburg Art Competition

In a collaboration with West College Scotland the St Petersburg Forum invited Assistant Principal, Angela Pignatelli, to judge the Forum’s annual art competition. She commented that all the participants deserved to be proud of what they had achieved. The paintings went on display at the National Library on Mon 23 Jan.

**First Place: Lyubov Geller, “Nostalgia” School 473.** “This piece conveys a tender narrative and shows an exceptional level of painting ability. The dabs of paint and brush strokes show a level of painterly understanding which is very sophisticated. Well done on the creation of such a poignant piece which tells a story.”

**Second Place: Bogdan Kostromin, “Sunny Day” School 316.** “This painting shows a complex level of colour awareness and understanding. The way in which the sun has been depicted, as it falls onto the architecture, is expertly done. The compositional arrangement shows a highly skilled level of depth and perspective.”

**Third Place: Kseniya Buranova, “To School Again” School 46.** “This piece has a gentle touch of brush stroke to convey a symbolic subject matter. It’s delicate colour palette and paint handling shows a sensitivity of spirit. It is an interesting play with reality and enters into an imaginary world. A beautifully simple piece of story-telling.”

Largs Cronies Burns Club Annual Supper

Largs Cronies Burns Club held its 28th Annual Dinner at The Willowbank Hotel on Thursday 26th January 2017. The proceedings were opened with a welcome to members and guests from Club President, David Galt, followed by the saying of Grace by Rev Bill Armstrong. The Haggis was addressed with gusto by David Caldwell, having been piped in by club piper, Allan Wilson.

The Principal Speaker for the evening was Jim Thompson of Kilbirnie Rosebery Burns Club, who delivered a very articulate and well-crafted “Immortal Memory”, while Past President Bert Thomson, proposed the “Toast to the Lasses”. The evening’s entertainment included riveting recitations from committee members, Robert Honeyman (To a Mountain Daisy), Ross McCallum (Tam o’ Shanter) and Ray Connal (To Robert Aiken), and singer, Willie Menzies, accompanied by Ronnie Munton, gave a rousing rendition of Burns’ songs.

The Secretary, Brian Jackson, read greetings received from kindred Burns Clubs and Ronnie Forrest, proposed the Toast to the Club. The raffle, organised by Club Treasurer, Craig Anderson, raised the sum of £325 which goes towards the Annual Schools’ Competition. A most enjoyable evening was concluded with a Vote of Thanks given by Vice President Joe McGinty, followed by a rousing rendition of Auld Lang Syne.

The Top Table: Back Row (left to right) Vice President Joe McGinty, Secretary Brian Jackson, David Caldwell. Front Row (left to right) Jim Thompson, President David Galt, Bert Thomson.
Cape Town Burns Supper

The humanitarian spirit of Scotland’s great bard Robert Burns shone brightly at the recent Burns Supper held at the Kelvin Grove Club in Newlands, Cape Town, South Africa.

This annual charity event is arguably the biggest Burns Dinner in the southern hemisphere and celebrates Burns’ birth and all things Scottish. Almost 400 guests attended this year’s event at the far flung tip of Africa! Awash with tartans of many hues, bagpipes, whisky galore, haggis, song, music and dance from the Highlands and islands, the serious charity auction was supported by a capacity crowd.

A record amount was raised at the event this year to support the beneficiaries, the Christine Revell Children’s Home for abandoned and abused infants and the Sarah Fox Hospital for palliative care and terminally ill children.

The headline sponsor, Northern Cross Wealth Management’s Renee Yuille, “The lasting strength and depth of these Scots traditions and the ideals passed from generation to generation and kept alive in such an open and unfettered manner, are certainly values we can identify with and support. The main focus is and always will be the benevolence of charity.”

The backing of partner sponsor, the British Chamber of Commerce, underlines the importance of maintaining cultural identity, especially around the qualities championed in the life and works of a national icon such as Robert Burns, that most gifted and observant writer, chronicler and humanitarian.

Eminent speakers at the dinner were the Deputy British High Commissioner, Peter Boxer; Lord Simon McDonald of Moidart MBE; Shadow Minister for Energy, Gordon Mackay MP and CEO of the SA Fashion Council, Anita Stanbury. Guest of honour was the Premier of the Western Cape MEC Helen Zille.

For more information please go to: www.burnsnights.co.za

Ronnie Jack - Obituary

Ronnie Jack was born in 1941, in Ayr, one of a generation of Scottish scholars who came of academic age in the 1960s, almost the first generation able to build careers in Scottish universities as specialists in Scottish literature.

For more than forty years, “R.D.S. Jack” (Ronnie Jack), who died shortly before Christmas, has been one of the most distinctive voices in Robert Burns studies. He was also well known as a scholar on other aspects of Scottish literature, and more formal tributes elsewhere will no doubt do justice to the fuller range of his accomplishments, but it seems appropriate that Robert Burns Lives! should include an appreciation of his published writing about Burns. More than almost any other recent Scottish critic of Burns, Ronnie Jack showed immense regard for Burns’s achievement as poet, judged by the highest standards, while rejecting bardolatry and the common urge to excuse weak writing merely because Burns was expressing admirable or memorable sentiments. For the full tribute by Professor Patrick Scott see: http://www.electricscotland.com/familytree/frank/burns.htm
Calgary Burns Club Supper

The 41st Annual Burns Supper was held on Friday 20th January 2017 in the Calgary Telus Convention Centre with 524 Members and guests in attendance. The first part of the evening included a traditional 4-course dinner, and each course was introduced by its “Remove” which is a CBC tradition to introduce the food being served. Trekker Armstrong, in his role of 1st VP and organizer of the event, acted as MC for the first part of the evening and introduced the various presentations and acts during the evening.

Merv Howitt gave the Selkirk Grace and David Hood, William Lawson, Bruce Gordon and Paul Kane delivered the Removes. As part of our traditional evening, the Loyal Toast was presented by Bill Spiers. A replica of a Robert Burns statue was provided as a take away for each table. Each of these statues takes a lot of work to produce by our dedicated club members; Tony Grace, Bill Laing, Paul Armstrong, Jim McLaughlin, Bill MacLachlan and Trekker Armstrong.

The guests were treated to some wonderful singing through the evening from Ron Pratt and the Calgary Burns Club Singers, who performed, “O Canada”, Scots Wha Hae”, “Hail Caledonia”, “Bring on the Whisky”, “Birks of Aberfeldy” and “The Star of Rabbie Burns”.

The Haggis was carried by Jim Osborne accompanied by Sword-bearers Ken Carr and Steven Campbell, and piped in by 2 members of the Calgary Police Service Pipe Band. Jamie Osborne, son of Jim Osborne, then delivered the Address to the Haggis. In the spirit of celebrating Canada’s 150th anniversary of Confederation the supper’s program included recognition of the Scots’ contribution in making us who we are as a country. In honour of Canada’s Anniversary, the Club’s Bard Jim McLaughlin recited his poem “The Scots Who Built This Canada”. In addition, a copy of Club Life Member Jack Whyte's “Toast to Canada” was provided to each table to take home.

During the first half, the Calgary Police Service Pipe Band entertained the guests with a selection of Scottish songs from their Pipes, Drums and Dancers. After the interval, the head table was piped in by Club Member Kyle Scott and consisted of the Calgary Burns Club President Henry Cairney, the speaker for the evening, Willie Gibson, Gordon McCulloch, Gerry Wood and the Club’s newest Ordinary Member Don Humphreys, Edmonton Burns Club President Scott Montgomery and the President of Robert Burns Association of North America (RBANA) Colin Harris. The MC duties were then passed from Trekker Armstrong to President Henry Cairney who gave the President’s remarks. An entertaining and unique “Immortal Memory” was then delivered by Willie Gibson who flew over from Bonnie Scotland for the event. A humorous and engaging Toast to the Lassies was delivered by Gordon McCulloch with no lassies present to counter a reply. An emotional Toast to Absent Friends was offered by Gerry Wood followed by the song “Absent Friends” from the Singers.

Henry Cairney then gave his closing remarks and the evening concluded with the singing of “Auld Lang Syne” in a recording hauntingly led by our recently passed absent friend, Trevor Ramage.

For more photographs, courtesy of Shannon Duncan (asurphotos@hotmail.com) see:
www.calgaryburnsclub.com
Robert Burns (பார்ன்ஸ்) Translated into Tamil

Although he now lives between Singapore, Glasgow and London, Reza Ali, is originally from the southern coast of India, from Tamil Nadu. Not unlike Robert Burns, he also comes from a line of farmers! He recently addressed the Greenock Burns Club (the Mother Club) and talked about his love of Burns but more especially his desire to translate Burns' poem A Man's A Man For A' That (மனிதன் என்பவன் மனிதனன அதற்காகன) into his native language of Tamil.

He also enlightened the audience about the history of the Tamil language as written by George L. Hart Professor of Tamil, Chair in Tamil Studies University of California, Berkley. In summary he wrote: “To qualify as a classical tradition, a language must fit several criteria: it should be ancient, it should be an independent tradition that arose mostly on its own, not as an offshoot of another tradition, and it must have a large and extremely rich body of ancient literature. Unlike the other modern languages of India, Tamil meets each of these requirements. It is extremely old (as old as Latin, and older than Arabic); it arose as an entirely independent tradition, with almost no influence from Sanskrit or other languages; and its ancient literature is indescribably vast and rich.”

Reza’s opening remarks for the talk along with the Tamil translation can be found at: https://zodakreza.wordpress.com/2016/10/07/a-mans-a-man-for-a-that-by-robert-burns-a-tamil-translation/

Photograph shows Reza with the Executive Committee of the Mother Club, Greenock (L-R: Bill McCready (Past President), Reza Ali, Jim Donnelly (President), Jamie Donnelly (Senior Vice President)

Inverness Burns Club Anniversary Supper

Ninety two members and guests toasted the Immortal Memory of Robert Burns at the Lochardil House Hotel in Inverness. They had just been treated to an outstanding discourse on the life and works of Robert Burns by James McPherson, Past President of Elgin Burns Club and a much sought after speaker. President of the Inverness Burns Club, Mr. Hugh Grant who, following his Address to the Haggis, was pleased to introduce four generations of his family at the event including his great granddaughter – 4 year old Mya Williamson. (Could she be the youngest supper attendee on record?)

The Toast to the Lasses was delivered by Willie Cameron who is known locally as Mr. Loch Ness. While praising the qualities of our lasses he nevertheless took time to explore some of the eccentricities of the fairer sex. These gentle jibes were easily rebutted, however, by local lass Jennifer Brown who ably responded and made a few points of her own regarding the assumed pre-eminence of the male gender.

Members and guests were also enchanted by a special presentation made by past president David Henderson to our accompanist Mrs Sheila Bruce. Sheila had performed with a variety of artistes for the past 40 Anniversary suppers never having missed a single one. This remarkable record was recognised by the
Inverness Burns Supper (cont’d)

presentation of a unique leather bound version of the songs of Robert Burns which dated from the early nineteen hundreds. This treasure had been carefully refurbished and boxed prior to the presentation by a craftsman friend of our tireless Secretary, Glen Stewart. In addition Sheila was presented with a lovely bouquet of flowers by our President’s wife Mrs Joan Grant.

The evening was rounded off by some more delightful performances from Sheila and her artistes (Ian Douglas and Elaine & Paul Griffiths) and some community singing involving all present before ending with the traditional rendition of Auld Lang Syne - the national anthem for the world.

Back Row from left: Bill Hamilton (Piper), Fiona Larg (Treasurer), Willie Cameron (Mr. Loch Ness) Toast to the Lasses, Mrs Alison Cameron, Glen Stewart (Secretary), Mr. David Brown.
Front Row: James McPherson, (Immortal Memory), Mrs Elizabeth McPherson, Hugh Grant (President), Mrs Joan Grant, Mrs Jennifer Brown (Reply frae the lasses)

Birthday Tributes to Burns at St Michael’s Church and Burns Mausoleum

The Southern Scottish Counties Burns Association held its Robert Burns Commemorative Service at St Michael’s Church in Dumfries on 25th January 2017.

It was very heartening to see the Church filled with people from all walks of life, along with pupils from seven local primary and all four of the town’s secondary schools. The children who performed were all first class (Gretna Primary Choir below) and the head boy and girl from Maxwelltown High were both excellent readers.

Rev Dr Maurice Bond conducted the service and addressed the congregation with a wonderful address. SSCBA President Mike Duguid offered a few words of welcome at the start, while Provost Ted Thomson spoke admirably of the town and those who participated during the service. This was a very poignant and enjoyable service in honour of Our National Bard.

After the service a wreath-laying ceremony, conducted by Dumfries Burns Club’s President Peter Kormylo, was held at Burns Mausoleum before refreshments were served in the Church Hall.

Burns Suppers Abound in Falkirk

The first phase of the new war memorial in Camelon, Falkirk, was completed in time for the armistice day services in 2016 but as this was dedicated primarily to the first world war the committee embarked on a further fund-raising campaign to add two further pillars dedicated to the second world war and subsequent conflicts. As part of that effort a Burns Supper was held and the magnificent sum of £1100 was raised.

A full programme of song, recitation and toasts culminated in a sketch which parodied A Red, Red, Rose written and performed by Willie Stewart. Photo (L to R): piper Tommy Couper, our main speaker Jim Mein, Brenda Glen, Brian Goldie and Willie Gibson.
Falkirk Burns Suppers (cont’d)

Brian Goldie and his wife also attended the annual Burns Supper for Falkirk High School. At a recent meeting with the head teacher Keith Webster, Brian asked how preparations for the event were proceeding. He intimated that the class of senior pupils who eventually for the most part enter a career in events management had been left off the curriculum in 2016 and it was doubtful that there would be a supper this year. Brian suggested that the group of former pupils of his from Bantaskin primary, now in their third year at the High School were capable of taking over. They were encouraged to form a junior management team (pictured) which with a little help from Brian put on a great show of poems, toasts and dancing complimented by our meal of haggis, neeps and tatties. The whole thing from start to finish including the setting of the budget for the festivities was undertaken by the team to their great credit.

Burns Celebrated in Japan

The Chubu (central Japan) branch of the Japan Scotland Association (JSA) held its first Burns Supper at the Hilton Nagoya Hotel on January 28th 2017. Gerry McLellan, head of the Chubu branch and from Dumfries, has lived in Japan since 1988. Since becoming head last year, he has held a whisky tasting and is now arranging a Highland Games. However, he has always wanted to host a Burns Night.

‘Coming from Dumfries, it was the logical thing to do,’ he said. ‘I won the Burns prize at primary school and have always been interested in Burns. Auld Lang Syne is often played here when stores close or at graduation ceremonies and Japanese are always intrigued to find that the music was written by Burns.’

The Hilton General manager is from Germany and used to work in Scotland. He is a great lover of whisky and was thrilled to be involved and to have the event at the Hilton.

Gerry says that he also received well wishes from the mayor of Nagoya who hoped he would be able to attend next January.

The night was a huge success and was truly international with guests from Japan, England, Wales, the US, Canada, Germany, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines and France. All said they had a great night and want to attend next year and some of the guests are planning to recite some poetry next time!

One of the treats of the evening was the video message sent from the Burns Howff Club in Dumfries. Gerry expressed his gratitude for the time spent on sending a message from President William Johnston in Japanese and making a video to show the sights of Dumfries and the final resting spot of Burns. A few comments were made, mainly by Americans, of how lovely the close to the Globe Inn was.

Gerry made the Scotch Broth and the Hilton chef took care of everything else.

The spirit of Brotherhood was truly on display as new friends were made. Gerry received numerous thanks since the evening and he intends to make Burns Night a regular event on the Nagoya calendar.
Dumfries Burns Howff Club Anniversary Dinner

President William Johnston welcomed members to the 128th anniversary dinner of the Burns Howff club held in the Globe Inn, Dumfries on Wednesday, January 25. The atmosphere in the Globe enjoys a matchless gift and following grace by Honorary President, Dan Cook, Howffers were rewarded when Callum Watson piped in the haggis, which was enthusiastically addressed by the President. Songs throughout the evening from John Caskie and John Young with occasional support of the assemblage were heartily applauded as was the expressive musical selection from James Coutts, accordionist and Roddy Matthews, fiddler.

The significant part of the evening, The Immortal Memory, was given by Dave Scott. A native of Duns. His witty warm-up was coloured with the language of the Borders tongue but Scott swiftly distanced himself from the amusing comic when he touched on the humanitarian words that Burns wrote and which sadly are still relevant today.

The first recitation “The Holy Fair”, a satirical poem written by Burns in 1785 was delivered by Bobby Jess. This 27-verse tale reveals the characters present at the annual religious festival in Mauchline and as Jess sauntered and galloped through this tale he captured with brilliant impersonation the hypocrisy and pretence of the characters.

Howffer Brian Taylor is best known as the BBC's political editor, regularly appearing on television news with his reports from Holyrood. He is a respected speaker on Scottish politics but in his ‘Toast to The Lassies’ Taylor focused on the words that Burns had written about women and some of the relationships he had.

Further songs and community singing preceded past-president Jim McCambley’s narration of Willie Wastle. The evening drew to a close with junior vice-president Bill Graham giving the club’s appreciation to the artistes and immediate past-president Callum Watson thanking the chairman for his skilful handling of the anniversary dinner. There followed a boisterous performance of Auld Lang Syne and as Howffers departed in different directions from the Globe Inn's close they had been given many thought-provoking observations on which to ruminate.

Photos show the top table and speakers and a group of principal guests. Group seated, left to right: Brian Taylor; President William Johnston; Dave Scott. See full report at:


Yorkshire District Tartan Ball

This year’s ‘Tartan Ball,' sponsored by the Burns Federation Yorkshire District, will be held on Saturday 29th April 2017 in the prestigious Holiday Inn (Brooklands), Barnsley Road, Dodworth, Barnsley, S75 3JT.

There is a three-course dinner with tea and coffee and the ever-popular Iain MacPhail Scottish Dance Band from Edinburgh. All this for £30.50 per person. Tickets and information are available from May McGuffog on 01274 582577 or email mmandhmck@aol.com.

Lasses Lunch – a Date for the Diary

The Annual RBWF Lasses Lunch is scheduled for Sunday 14th May 2017 (12:00 pm - 4:00 pm) at the Hallmark Hotel, Irvine.
Logangate Burns Club Supper

A full capacity of 70 members and guests assembled in the Logangate Arms to celebrate our 60th anniversary dinner. President and chairman for the evening, Ian Farrell introduced the principal speaker for the night, Jim Thomson, Past President of RBWF.

Other guest speakers: Jim Morrison lassies, Robbie Duncan cronies'. The haggis was piped in by Pipe Major Sandy Bell presented by proprietor Brian Boyd addressed by Sandy Drury

Entertainment was provided by Pipe Major Sandy Bell, Hugh Robertson and Bletherskite. Recitations by Andy Brown and Eric Dempster. Vote of thanks by acting Vice President Neil Murray.

All in attendance received an inscribed whisky glass with a little something to put in it and a 1957 half-crown; the significance of which is that when the club was formed members paid a half crown per week subscription quite a lot in 1957 and today we are still paying £6.50 per year, the equivalent of half a crown per week.

Stunning New Album of Burns Songs

Stranraer’s Robyn Stapleton, BBC Scotland’s Young Traditional Musician of the year 2014, has launched a stunning new album of her favourite Burns songs.

Growing up in the South West of Scotland, Robyn was introduced to singing through the songs of Robert Burns. From a very young age, his songs and poems gave her an appreciation of the Scots language, cultural and musical heritage, which she has always been so proud to share. Her album shows the incredible range of his works, covering the themes of humanity, history, politics, love and nature and she sings them with passion, humour and emotional truth all of which made for a remarkable musical treat. For any lover of Burns songs or, indeed, for any newcomer to his lyric-writing genius, this is a must-buy CD

[Having attended the launch of the album at ‘The Usual Place’ in Dumfries on 15th January I am in full agreement with every word of the glowing review written by Marc Higgins in the Northern Sky magazine at: Robyn Stapleton - Songs of Robert Burns (Laverock Records ... Ed]

Youngsters’ Talent Expected to Shine at Schools Festivals

The Robert Burns World Federation is delighted to announce that the 2017 National Festivals for Scottish school children will be held at St. Athanasius Primary School, John Street, Carluke, Lanarkshire, ML8 4DD.

The Secondary event will take place on Saturday 22nd April 2017 and the Primary event on Saturday 6th May 2017.

We are indebted to Golden Wonder for its sponsorship of the schools’ competitions and especially the flagship Schools Festivals where the youngsters have the opportunity to reach the pinnacle of achievement in performing Burns’ works.
**Full House at Helensburgh Burns Club**

Sixty members and their guests attended the Helensburgh Burns Club Supper at the Lodge St George on Friday 13th of January. Our Club piper Colin Lawrie piped in the Haggis, which was addressed by Alasdair MacCuish.

As tradition requires the Immortal Memory was presented by the club President, Geoff Depledge. He chose as his theme the family and friends who helped nurture our Bard up to the publication of The Kilmarnock Edition.

Ian Millar, a retired minister from Bonhill, proposed the Toast to the Lasses. We were lucky to have Ian as he is always in demand capturing the essence of Burns with his well-practiced humour. The reply was by Maggie Depledge, who after some 20 years of practice, delivered a response more than asserting the women’s place in society. To further enhance the lasses’ participation Past President Annette Garrick recited the Right of Women.

Local Burnsian John McKenzie performed of Tam O’ Shanter, our secretary Robert Foxx read his own poems, and Dumfries Howff Club member Gordon Johnston, suitably attired, gave his infamous rendering of the “Court of Equity.” Music and song for the evening was provided by club favourites John & Lesley Young of whom the members never tire.

**Burns Club of Atlanta**

For the 122nd anniversary of their foundation, members of the Burns Club of Atlanta filled to the brim the Robert Burns Cottage of Atlanta for their 2017 Dinner. The evening was headlined by a rousing Immortal Memory from the Immediate Past President of the Federation, Dr. Peter Hughes. Other speakers toasted leaders on both sides of the Atlantic. The Hon. Jeremy Pilmore-Bedford, Consul General of the United Kingdom, toasted the Queen, while The Hon. Shane Stephens, Consul General of the Republic of Ireland, toasted the President of the United States. Club President William Tucker and Vice-President Steve Winn presided over an epic evening that added more memories to a Cottage that has witnessed 107 years of celebrating the memory of our Beloved Bard. [Photos Club President William Tucker and Dr. Peter Hughes and replica Burns Cottage]

**Isle of Arran Visitor Centre Re-opens**

The Isle of Arran Whisky Visitor Centre at Lochranza opened its door again to visitors on 7th February. They look forward to welcoming everyone and hope they will all like their brand new downstairs lay out!

Official Federation sponsors:  [http://www.arranwhisky.com](http://www.arranwhisky.com)