Federation members have just enjoyed a hugely successful Annual Conference in the Peebles Hydro. The highlight of the weekend was the inauguration of our new President, Peter Hughes. A native of Law in Lanarkshire, Peter is a highly respected engineer from the steel industry. He has been working closely with outgoing President Jim Thomson to ensure the Federation’s finances are kept under a tight rein and has introduced some innovative approaches to funding. I am saddened to report that our Chief Executive Alison Tait has decided to leave the Federation and move on to a new challenge within the charity sector. I’m sure you would wish me to record a massive vote of thanks to Alison for her time at the helm and wish her every success in her new venture. It will come as no surprise that Alison will continue to support the Federation wherever she can. A more detailed report on the conference will appear in the November Newsletter.

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The Soldier’s Return

For gold the merchant ploughs the main,
The farmer ploughs the manor;
But glory is the sodger’s prize,
The sodger’s wealth is honour;
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.

by Robert Burns

President Peter Takes Over

The Federation’s Annual Conference was held in the Pebbles Hydro Hotel over the weekend of 4-6th September 2015. In addition to the AGM, two splendid dinners, a seminar, a ceilidh and an uplifting church service, the main event was the inauguration of the new President of the Federation, Dr Peter Hughes. During the handover Peter praised outgoing President Jim Thomson for his outstanding year of office during which he had worked tirelessly on behalf of the Federation despite major health challenges. He had led from the front and created a much leaner and effective Board structure which has financial viability as its core function whilst remaining conscious of the values which have sustained the organisation for over 130 years.
Edinburgh - Burns Celebration Day

On the 18th July 2015 Edinburgh and District Burns Club Association (EDBCA) played host to a Celebration of the life of Robert Burns and held a Poetry Competition for the Tom McIlwraith Trophy.

Jim Shields, Chairman of the EDBCA, welcomed everyone and the celebration started with songs and poetry by Gordon Jamieson, Margaret Anderson, John Wilson, Jim Weatherspoon and Jim Shields. Cameron Kerr, a young National Burns competition winner also recited and Young Burnsian of the Year, Rory McIver, entertained with his beautiful singing. Actor John Cairney gave an informative talk on his 37 years playing Robert Burns across the globe before joining Helen Morrison and Cameron Goodall, as competition judges.

The competition was won by Stewart Houston representing the Lanarkshire Association reciting *The Inventory*, second was Charlie Beaton, representing Grampian Association, reciting an excerpt from *The Cotters Saturday Night*, and third was Avril Kerr, our only lady competitor, representing the Southern Counties Association, reciting *The Epistle to Davie*.

Jim Shields announced the winners and John Cairney presented Stewart Houston with the winner’s Quaich and certificates to first, second and third. [Gordon Jamieson Secretary EDBCA]

Third Degree Burns

A medical term, well known to many in the profession, but, here in Edinburgh, for the second year running, a group known as Third Degree Youth Theatre, presented, in their own inimitable manner, a musical on the life of our beloved Bard with all the energy and enthusiasm which is omnipresent here in Edinburgh during the Festival.

While last year’s was held within the confines of St George’s School, this year the company moved to a superb venue at the Royal College of Surgeons and played to full houses for the best part of a week bringing the life of Burns to hundreds who hitherto, were non Burnsians and who went away, with a lasting impression of what the man had accomplished during his lifetime.

Starting off in a Mauchline market, the vista moved to Edinburgh’s High Street, Creech’s office, Nancy’s home (and Nancy’s maid), down to Dumfries, back to Mauchline and ended with the meeting between Jean and Nancy, very sensitively played by the two young lassies.

The crowd scenes (and there were many) allowed a full chorus of around 20 to sing lustily through a number of well-known Burns tunes, but with new words, depicting the event of the time and the stage sets, while minimalistic, were more than adequate, while the attention to detail of the costumes was impressive.

A first class show and well done to the Third Degree Youth Theatre, who deserve opportunities to travel with this show throughout Scotland and beyond. Well done to the producer and musical director for all the hard work put in and for their joint ability in bringing out the very best in our young folk, who did Edinburgh proud during yet another wonderful Festival. [Review submitted by Jim Shields]

p.s. "And now the RABBIE Challenge? Would your school or educational establishment like to have a go at producing "RABBIE" or the longer version "Burns Supper"? If so please apply to contact@first-scottish.co.uk for the script and musical arrangements, and performing rights AT NO COST."
Brow Well Commemoration Service

Burnsians from near and far gathered at the Brow Well near Ruthwell on the evening of 22nd June, to commemorate the 259th anniversary of the death of Robert Burns, Scotland’s National Bard.

The company which included officials and delegates from Burns Clubs was welcomed by David Miller, President of the Southern Scottish Counties Burns Association (SSCBA) who introduced Mr. James Thomson, President of the Robert Burns World Federation. Following a Call to Worship from the Rev. Gerald Moule, an oration was delivered by Mr. Thomson in which he spoke of the poet’s final days in July 1796 and his last illness, misdiagnosed by Dr. William Maxwell, who sent him to bathe in the tidal waters of the Solway and to drink from the chalybeate waters of the well. This was the treatment for what is now thought to have been endocarditis or rheumatic heart disease, nowadays easily treated with antibiotics. Mr. Thomson demolished the myths created by Burns’ early biographers, Dr. James Currie and Allan Cunningham, who both claimed that the poet’s demise was caused by excessive drinking and, on one occasion, passing out in the snow in Dumfries in January 1795 although records show that no snow fell in the town at that time.

The speaker placed a commemorative wreath at the well while a lament on the bagpipes was played by Pipe Major Callum Watson. SSCBA Senior Vice President Mike Duguid proposed a vote of thanks.

Special guests at the social gathering at the Cairndale Hotel included Les Jardine, representing the Clarencefield and District Community Council and from the Solway Firth Partnership, Clair McFarlane and Nick Coombey. Mr. Coombey spoke on the major project planned for the Brow Well to provide flood prevention and drainage and to place seating and an interpretation panel. Subject to funding being in place, work was hoped to start later this year. A lively entertainment programme, M.C.’d by SSCBA Secretary John Caskie rounded off a memorable evening before a vote of thanks delivered by SSCBA JVP Gordon Johnston. The accompanists were Willie McRoberts and Donald Torrance. [Report by David Smith]
Lanarkshire Association of Burns Clubs - Covington Mains Commemoration - 5 July 2015

Burnsians from all over travelled to join the annual commemoration at the Covington Mains cairn at Thankerton. The typical Scottish weather ensured the group were subjected to light showers and midges during the short ceremony at the cairn.

Bobby Kane, LABC President began by welcoming the special guests from the Robert Burns World Federation and representatives from Burns’ clubs nationwide. He introduced the RBWF immediate past President Jane Brown and invited her to deliver the eulogy. Jane spoke of Robert Burns’ 1786 journey to Edinburgh which resulted in him stopping overnight in Lanarkshire to enjoy the hospitality of Archibald Prentice and the many neighbouring farming folks, who gathered to meet and converse with Burns. Jane also pondered on how Burns would view today’s worldwide problems quoting appropriately from the poem ‘Man Was Made to Mourn’.

Amy McIntyre, a P5 pupil from Glengowan Primary School in Caldercruix was in attendance to welcome guests to the commemoration with her tuneful bagpiping. Amy also played the lament as Bobby and Jane laid a floral tribute at the cairn (above photo) in remembrance of the Bard’s visit to our area and the upcoming anniversary of his untimely death in July 1796.

Following the commemoration, afternoon tea was served at the nearby Tinto House Hotel. Fifty two adults and six children enjoyed sandwiches, sausage rolls and sweet treats before being entertained by some of the Lanarkshire children who had taken part in the recent Robert Burns National Schools Festival.

Molly Owens (right) from St. Elizabeth’s Primary School in Hamilton recited ‘Address to a Haggis’ with purpose and confidence. The 2015 winner of the RBWF ‘Address to a Haggis’ competition, Will Kirk listened intently to Molly’s performance and agreed with the others that she would be a future contender for this title.

Stonehouse Primary pupil, Lucy Wilkie (left) charmed the audience with her rendition of ‘O Whistle and I’ll come tae ye, ma lad’. Her sweet voice and her flirty actions brought the song alive and many lads will be ‘blinking’ their bonie black een at her in time to come. Robert Lawson a P6 pupil from Condorrat Primary, Cumbernauld delivered a very compelling recitation of ‘Address to the Toothache’. He had the sympathy of everyone present as he vividly demonstrated the torment of toothache and his powerful voice delivered Burns’ words with great passion.

Our piper, Amy McIntyre played a delightful selection of Scottish tunes much to the enjoyment of all, including hotel patrons and a guide dog sitting in the lounge, who peeped in for a closer look. We look forward to following Amy’s and the other performers’ progress in the coming years.

Kay Blair, LABC vice president gave a hearty vote of thanks to all the young performers and complimented the hotel on the catering arrangements. She thanked the LABC committee for all their efforts in making the day a special occasion in the Burns calendar. Bobby Kane closed by wishing everyone a pleasant summer and looked forward to meeting them at future events in the area.

The photograph (opposite top) shows the attendees gathered to pay tribute to the Bard at the wreath-laying at the cairn.

[Patricia Leslie Secretary, Lanarkshire Association of Burns Clubs]
Covington Gathering

Treasured Gift Presented to the Burns Federation

The Scots Society of St Andrew Hull was formed in 1910 “to strengthen the ties which bind Scotsmen resident in or near Hull” and it will cease to exist on 5 September 2015 at a farewell lunch. It is certain that one of the ties that binds Scotsmen the world over are the works of our Bard, Robert Burns, and perhaps the Society’s greatest treasure was a Burns Chair.

The Chair was given to the Society on 25 January 1952 by the Burns Club of Hull and has a plaque attached to it giving its background. After the death of Burns his widow gave the chair to her friend Mrs Miller of Sunderland who in turn presented to her friend Mrs Lackenby. On the death of Mrs Lackenby her daughter, Mrs Leggot of Hull, took possession of the chair and upon her death the Chair became the property of James Work, a merchant in Hull. Mr Work presented the chair to the Burns Club of Hull in 1899. From the investigations subsequently carried out by the Society it appears there is no doubt that the chair is one of six owned by the poet.

The chair has starred on the BBC TV programme Antiques Roadshow where the value was given as “priceless” despite the fact that the Chair is now showing signs of wear and tear from over 200 years of use.

Mr John McKay, President of The Scots Society of St Andrew Hull, contacted the RBWF and made the offer of the Chair as the Society was closing down. On Monday 11 August 2015 Mr McKay presented the Chair to Federation President Jim Thomson in the Dower House at Kilmarnock with a framed copy of the provenance. The Chair will be on display in the new Federation Office in John Dickie Street Kilmarnock after the move there in the very near future.
Burns on the Web

People all around the world can now hear a new ‘taste’ of Robert Burns every week on the internet. Glasgow-based Burns’ performer, Neil Macgillivray, is recording a short piece of the Bard’s work on a weekly basis, either complete short poems or extracts from longer works. A great admirer of the Poet’s prolific output and a past winner of the Tam o’ Shanter, Lapraik and Whistle competitions, Neil is keen to let people in other lands hear the words spoken as well as read them in print.

Neil said: "I've had the good fortune to be invited to perform overseas and found that people love a recitation in a Scottish voice. I had already created a website called Words of Burns and it seemed a good idea to use it as a platform for enabling people to listen to the wonderful and expressive language used by Burns, whether in Scots or English. The most difficult part I find is selecting a different piece every week that alternates the mood and tone and pace from the previous one. There is such a wealth to choose from and I try to cover the lesser known as well as the popular.

"Anyone wishing to listen to the regular recordings should visit www.wordsofburns.com and click on the ‘f’ (Facebook) link, but you don't need to join Facebook to do that, and then you just click on the piece you want to hear. If anyone has a particular favourite they'd like to hear they can let me know via the website."

Jean Armour Dinner

Heavy rain on 6th July didn’t dampen the spirits of members and friends of the Burns Howff Club who gathered at Jean Armour’s statue in Dumfries to honour the memory of the wife of Robert Burns.

The company was welcomed by President Callum Watson who placed a floral tribute on the plinth and invited past President John Clark to deliver a tribute to Burns’ “Bonnie Jean”. A lament on the bagpipes was played by Colin Lawrie, a guest from Dumbarton Burns Club before the company processed to the Globe Inn for the 11th Jean Armour Dinner.

Delegates from Dumfries Burns Club, St. Michaels Burns Club and Dumfries Ladies and Annan Ladies Burns were introduced with a special welcome to Annette Garrick and Graham Hill of Helensburgh Burns Club.

After dinner, a toast to “Jean Armour” was delivered by Andrea Thompson, commissioning editor of Dumfries & Galloway Life magazine, who eloquently spoke on the travails suffered by faithful Jean who put up with her husband’s philandering. “Rab should have had twa wives” she is recorded as saying.

The toast to “The other women in Burns’ life” was submitted by Alison Tait, Chief Executive of the Robert Burns World Federation, who examined the influence on the poet by many female admirers over the years and which gave rise to some of the greatest love songs ever written.

After dinner entertainment was sustained by John and Lesley Young from Dumbarton with songs, solo and duet, to guitar accompaniment, courteous recitations from Avril Kerr, songs from Ian McIntyre and a hilarious sketch, ”Robert and Jean”, performed by Jane Brown and Gordon Johnston in which “Robert “was chastised
Jean Armour Dinner (cont’d)

by his wife for carousing at the Globe Inn to all hours and coming home “fou” when his apologies were not accepted!

Peter Kormylo, President of Dumfries Burns Club, conveyed thanks for the hospitality received on behalf of the delegates from visiting Burns Clubs and Colin Gibson, junior vice president, Burns Howff Club, proposed a vote of thanks to the artistes and all who had contributed to the success of the evening. The accompanist was Willie McRobert.

Poetry and Art

Barrmill Jolly Beggars Burns Club held the finals and presentation of awards for their children’s poetry reading, design a ‘Welcome to Beith’ poster (P4-7) and a colouring in challenge P1-3). The culmination of the competitions was recently held in Beith Library.

SVP William Edmunds gave a warm welcome to competitors and prize winners. He said how pleased the club was to encourage young people in their verse-speaking and artistic endeavours. He also praised the event sponsor, Foundation Scotland, for their excellent support and co-operation.

He continued by thanking all the young people, adults as well as teaching staff at Gateside and Beith Primary Schools who had all given excellent assistance in highlighting the competition and encouraging young people to take part. He made special mention of Mrs Jean Kennedy, senior library assistant and all staff at NAC Beith Library for their support and encouragement and for hosting the event in the town’s library.

He then welcomed Kenneth J Gibson, MSP and thanked him for taking the time from his busy schedule to come along and spend the day listening to and speaking to the children and viewing the many wonderful colouring in (P1-3) and Design a Welcome to Beith poster (P4-7) which were on display.

Thomas Muir Celebrations

This month sees the beginning of a series of national celebrations marking the 250th anniversary of the birth of Thomas Muir of Huntershill (1765 – 1799). Thomas Muir was a prominent Scottish radical and is often referred to as ‘the father of Scottish democracy’. He was an advocate for democratic principles and in 1793 was found guilty of sedition and transported to Australia.

The story of the infamous trail and harsh sentence was relayed in the national newspapers, while the account of the trial was printed and sold across Britain and in North America in the 1790s. Muir’s democratic vision (and the effects of the trial) played a part in the Robert Burns’ later work, evident in ‘A Man’s A Man for A’ That’ and ‘Scots Wha Hae’ for example.

East Ayrshire’s copy of The Trial of Thomas Muir, Esq Younger of Huntershill: before the High Court of Judiciary... (Edinburgh: printed for and sold by Alexander Scott – Gazetteer Office, 1783) is notable in that it is inscribed by “John Richmond, writer, Mauchline”. John Richmond was an old friend of the poet and in the 1780s was secretary of their Mauchline Bachelor’s Club, The Court of Equity.

You can find out more about the Thomas Muir 250 at their website http://www.thomasmuir.co.uk/index.html or by following @ThomMuirFes on Twitter.

- See more at: http://www.ayrshirecollections.co.uk/the-trial-of-thomas-muir
Burns in the Classroom – Part 2

[Last month’s newsletter contained an interesting and informative article by Mrs Sheila Scott, who teaches English at Kirkcudbright Academy. In the second part Mrs. Scott outlines how Burns Clubs and individuals can play a part in promoting Burns in the classroom. Ed]

“The only level at which I have taught Burns in any real detail is Advanced Higher. With the assistance of a local Burns expert, I grouped (as far as possible) the prescribed poems into the categories of religion, politics and society; I also borrowed a useful selection of commentaries on Burns – works by Thomas Crawford and Liam McIlvanney were especially helpful, as was the excellent website http://www.electricscotland.com/burns/index.html, with its fund of articles on the life and works of Burns.

We began by looking at Burns the man and the 18th century social, religious and cultural context at local, national and international level. The students were given research tasks on topics such as The Auld Lichts and the New Lichts, and politics and farming in 18th century Scotland. Before studying any poems we also looked in general at Burns’ skill with words, in particular www.lettersofnote.com/2012/01/thou-eunuch-of-language.html. Prior to reading each poem, we discussed the notes I had prepared then listened to a recording of the poem as the students read the text. They found this especially helpful when analysing the songs. Additionally, they enjoyed comparative study and discussion of the effectiveness of techniques such as satire and humour in a range of poems.

Although the students at this level had some reservations about studying Burns, feedback on completion of the course was overwhelming positive:

I actually enjoyed Robert Burns’ poetry more than I thought I would - I think this is because we went into so much detail about his background and the background of the poems, which I feel has helped me to appreciate them more.

I really enjoyed learning Burns as it showed how someone can manipulate words to send a message and how a piece of writing can have many layers to it.

It did change my view of him. I now like his work and can admire him whereas before in Higher I really didn’t like his work.

What then can be done to encourage more teaching of Burns in schools? In my experience, there are at least two barriers to more widespread study of Burns in secondary schools: on the part of pupils, the perceived difficulty of the language; on the part of teachers, lack of confidence in/unfamiliarity with teaching Burns – exacerbated by little time to investigate resources and prepare lessons. Perhaps if teachers were more aware of support available from local Burns Clubs in the form of providing guidance and resources, and a willingness on the part of Club members to lead workshops and student discussions, they would feel less intimidated by the prospect. Finally, reverting to Advanced Higher student feedback:

Maybe a good way to get more students interested would be to go into the background of Burns and his society, as they might be able to relate to/understand him more.

Make it more widely known that he wrote things besides the classics (Tam O’ Shanter, To a Mouse) and his love poems.

Show some of his work in classes, not to study, just to look at. I would say some of the satirical poems should be looked at, even if it’s only to show as an example of how political views can be expressed through the voices of ‘Twa Dugs’.
Unveiling a Glorious Scottish Past Down Under

A new plaque dedicated to Robert Burns was unveiled at a Corangamite Shire civic reception recently as part of the Camperdown Robert Burns Scottish Festival. The plaque, unveiled by the Melbourne-based British Consul General Gareth Hoar, was commissioned by the Scottish Government and presented to Corangamite Shire. Mayor Chris O’Connor thanked all those who were part of the team behind the initial project for the plaque. “We are very grateful to the Scottish Government for recognising the significance of our Robert Burns statue and presenting us with this token of acknowledgment,” Cr O’Connor said. “The council is pleased to have such a strong leading role in the preservation of the statue and the community support for the event demonstrates its prominence in our community.” Cr Ruth Gstrein said presentations by Mr Hoar, Mayor O’Connor and Gordon Ashley highlighted the importance of the statue for both Camperdown and the worldwide Scottish community. With thanks to the Warrnambool Standard and The Camperdown Chronicle

Photograph above - from left to right Gordon Ashley, Cr Ruth Gstrein, Gareth Hoar, British Consul-General, and Cr Chris O’Connor, Mayor of Corangamite.

Ayr Flower Show – RBWF Success

At Ayr Flower Show, the Federation stand took third place in the “Golden Rose Award – Our Society” category. Well done to the Burns Clubs and individuals who assisted. In the photograph are: John Campbell, (Kilmarnock No 0), Malcolm Ferguson (Alloway), Ann McNair (Kilmarnock Howff), Robert Sommerville (Mauchline Burns Club) Cynthia Leitch (Irvine Lasses), RBWF SVP Peter Hughes and Derek Murdoch (Irvine Burns Club).
Birnie Rhind Statue Unveiling

Representatives and friends of the Lanarkshire Association of Burns Clubs gathered at Hamilton Library on Friday 14 August 2015 for a reception hosted by South Lanarkshire Council to mark the unveiling of a refurbished marble statue of Robert Burns. The life size marble statue had been purchased in the 1870s by Sir John Watson, a Lanarkshire coal baron. It remained in the Watson family until the mid-1920s when it was gifted to Hamilton Town Council and remained on display in council buildings for some decades before being packed away during a buildings refurbishment.

Burnsian Gordon Ashley uncovered this significant work that had been put into storage some years before by the council and it was apparent that the statue would require specialist attention before it could again be placed on public display. He issued a rallying call for the statue to be restored and to be back on public view. It was estimated that cleaning and conservation costs could amount to £7,500. Photograph right, courtesy of Jim Leslie, shows: LABC President Bobby Kane, Gordon Ashley and Provost Eileen Logan.

In spring 2014, LABC decided to raise funds for the restoration. Councilor Lesley McDonald, a member of Larkhall Burns Club, acted as mediator and confirmed that South Lanarkshire council would match any money raised up to the £7,500 estimate. The major fundraising event was a concert, organised by the Fauldhouse and Crofthead Burns Club’s Jimmy Bowes, which was held in October 2014. As well as the ‘cronies’ from the F&C club, several guest performers took to the stage and with the support of all the other Lanarkshire clubs, a hugely successful and enjoyable night was had by all who attended. In addition to the usual raffle prizes, a special ‘whisky raffle’ resulted in almost £1600 being raised. The event raised a total of £2,500 further club and personal donations, sales of tablet and brooches ensured that LABC reached their agreed target of £3500 and in December 2014 a cheque was handed over to South Lanarkshire Council.

The refurbishment was undertaken at the studio of Graciella Ainsworth and has produced a statue that is classy and exquisite with the cleaning work and conservation returning it to almost pristine condition. The Lanarkshire Association of Burns Clubs was delighted to be part of the initiative to re-instate this important memorial to our national bard in our area and hope that the statue will be enjoyed by all visitors to the library for many years to come.

Presidents Group Photo - L to R- John Campbell, President, Fauldhouse and Crofthead Burns Club; Bobby Kane, President, Lanarkshire Association of Burns Clubs; Kay Blair, President Larkhall Burns Club; South Lanarkshire Council Provost Eileen Logan; RBWF Senior Vice President, Peter Hughes; Wendy McNab, President, Kilbryde Burns Club; Murdo Morrison, President, Allanton Jolly Beggars Burns Club. (Photograph courtesy of SLC)

[Article submitted by Patricia Leslie, Secretary, Lanarkshire Association of Burns Clubs]
A Small Charity with a Global Reach – Come and Join Us

The main objectives of The Robert Burns World Federation Limited are to advance the education of the public about the life, poetry and works of Robert Burns and in furtherance thereof:

(i) To encourage and arrange competitions among the general public, students and/or school children.
(ii) To stimulate the development, teaching and study of Scottish literature, art, music and language.
(iii) To conserve buildings and places associated with Robert Burns and his contemporaries.
(iv) To strengthen the bond of fellowship amongst members of Burns Clubs and kindred societies throughout the world by encouraging Burns Clubs and kindred societies to honour the memory of Robert Burns and his works.

Clubs, Societies, Individuals and Corporate bodies who support the aims and objectives of the Robert Burns World Federation may be admitted as Federation Members.

Benefits of Membership:

1. **FREE** copy of our in-house publication, the Burns Chronicle, which keeps members up-to-date with world-wide club activities and provides academic articles which add to our knowledge and can be included in talks and writings.
2. **FREE** bi-monthly Newsletter with general information on Club and Burns related news
3. Increased knowledge of the life and works of Robert Burns and the pleasure of passing this knowledge on to like-minded Burnsians and to children and adults who visit Ayrshire from home and abroad
4. Cordial company of fellow Federation members nationwide and worldwide
5. The possibility of working with the schools committee who promote the works of Burns vigorously to over 80,000 children in Scotland and also to many in USA, Canada, Russia and the Pacific Rim.
6. Confidence that the RBWF Headquarters either answers, or fields and disseminates, questions from the general public, as well as Federation Members, fulfilling our main purpose of advancing and promoting knowledge of Robert Burns’ life and works
7. The opportunity to have an input to the future of the Federation
8. Without your subscription to RBWF, knowledge of, and interest in, Burns and his works would wither and die without a core driving force. Someone would have to re-invent a Federation of world-wide Burns Clubs.

**Application to become a Federation Member**

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Applications for Membership should be sent to:- The Robert Burns World Federation Limited, Dower House, Dean Castle Country Park, Kilmarnock, KA3 1XB. Tel/Fax: 01563 572469 E Mail admin@rbwf.org.uk Web www.rbwf.org.uk
Thornhill Burns Club Activities

On 16th June the Thornhill & District Burns Club had the second of their summer outings organised by their events manager, Bill Leggeat. This started with a visit to the Dumfries & Galloway Aviation Museum where there is a wealth of displays from the original control tower to external displays of a large numbers of aircraft to themed displays of uniforms, weapons, memorabilia etc. Next was the new Devil's Porridge Museum at Eastriggs where they were given a talk on the story of the extraordinary work that had been done there making munitions for the First World War. The last stop was to Drummuir Farm ice cream parlour for a well-deserved rest and a taste of their delicious dairy ice cream. The club also held its annual barbeque and thanks to Pauline & Geoff Martynuik for hosting it.

Farewell to Alison

After fours and a half years in her role as Chief Executive, Alison Tait is leaving the Federation. Always cheerful, Alison has been a fantastic ambassador for the Burns movement and has worked tirelessly to increase the profile of the organisation. She transformed the operation of the HQ office in the Dower House, Kilmarnock, employing modern technology to improve communications with clubs and members. Big improvements were made to the website including a much-needed facility for merchandising goods for sale. Although underutilized, mainly though concerns about control of content, her introduction of social media has greatly widened the access to the work of the Federation and should continue to be a useful conduit for contact with a younger generation of Burns' fans. The running of the Federation's Kilmarnock Office is now being carried out by Margaretann Dougall, in the role of Office Manager, and Beverley Thomson (far right), as the newly-recruited administrative assistant. Both ladies worked extremely hard at the recent annual conference and continue to provide excellent service in dealing with the many activities in the office.

Sponsored by the Weir Group.