With the Burns Supper season in January rapidly approaching I am often asked, particularly by non-Scots, where can they hear Burns' poems being recited so they can listen to the vernacular language and get a better sense of the meaning of the poem. The answer is simple; just go to the BBC website at http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/robertburns/works where you can listen to over 700 poems and songs by Burns. Another source is Neil Macgillivray's website: https://www.wordsofburns.com/burns in which he records a Burns poem every week. A member of the Robert Burns Guild of Speakers Neil was commissioned to record a collection of 15 poems for the University of Glasgow's Centre for Burns Studies for their online course on Robert Burns. Better still have a go at reciting them yourselves as Burns meant them to be.

Inscribed to the Right Hon. C. J. Fox

Human Nature’s his show-box – your friend, would you know him?
Pull the string, Ruling Passion – the picture will show him.
What pity, in rearing so beauteous a system, One trifling particular – Truth- should have miss’d him!
For spite of his fine theoretic positions, Mankind is a science defies definitions.

by Robert Burns - 1789

Irvine Conference Dinner

Last month’s newsletter tried to capture the highlights of the weekend including, of course, the installation of the new President Bill Nolan. On reflection I now realise it didn't properly reflect the enormous amount of preparation which went into the event, especially the inaugural dinner, a quite splendid affair, with outstanding catering provided by the North Ayrshire Council catering department.

Fortunately, one of the images by official photographer Alister Firth manages to capture all the wonderful touches provided by the Irvine Burns Club, the Irvine Lasses Burns Club, our sponsors Isle of Arran Distillery and the Federation’s Conference Committee which made it such a joyful occasion, much appreciated by delegates.

[Ed]
Leglen Memorial to Wallace and Burns

Ayr Burns Club Junior Vice President Melvyn ‘Mac’ McCrostie wanted to be among the Ayrshire Club members who strive to keep the monuments related to all things Burns in order. To this end, Mac, accompanied by Ayr Burns Club President Robbie McMahon and Immediate Past President Kathleen Davey set off with tools borrowed from a past President of the Robert Burns World Federation, John Skilling, himself a keen preserver, and made a huge start on the Leglen Glen Wallace and Burns cairn at this beautiful inspiring site.

While Robbie and Mac weeded and swept the path and stairway, Kathleen raked fallen leaves for removal. Mac also made a start at weeding the actual cairn. The plaque at the gate which was gifted by Calgary Burns Club was also cleaned up.

A return to this lovely Glen is to happen soon until Ayr Burns Club have the quiet beauty spot comfortable and safe again for tourists to enjoy. If anyone would like to join us in this work please message the Facebook page for more details of the next visit.

(Anne Miller)

Burns wrote to Mrs Dunlop from Mossgiel on 15th Nov 1786, and described visiting this spot as being a sort of pilgrimage:

‘I chose a fine summer Sunday, the only day of the week in my power, and walked half a dozen of miles to pay my respects to the "Leglen Wood", with as much devout enthusiasm as ever pilgrim did to Loreto; and as I explored every den and dell where I could suppose my heroic Countryman to have sheltered, I recollect (for even then I was a Rhymer) that my heart glowed with a wish to be able to make a Song on him, equal to his merits.’

The cairn was unveiled in 1929 on a mound within the Leglen Wood overlooking the River Ayr about three miles from Auchencruive. The location was described by Blind Harry in his poem Wallace as being a favourite hiding place of the Scottish patriot. Burns came under the influence of this poem in Hamilton of Gilbertfield’s abridged arrangement, in which we are told Wallace would go:

"Syne to the Leglen wood, when it was late,
To make a silent and a safe retreat."

These connections led to the erection of the cairn in memory of these two Scottish icons.

Federation in New Collaboration with Centre for Robert Burns Studies

Craig Sharp Memorial Lecture - 30 November 2018 16:30 Kelvin Hall, 1445 Argyle Street, Glasgow G3 8AW

Robert Burns World Federation and the Centre for Robert Burns Studies are delighted to announce the first Craig Sharp Memorial Lecture to be held in Kelvin Hall on Friday 30th November at 16:30. The Lecture will be delivered by two inspiring people, Professor, Nigel Leask and Novelist, Catherine Czerkawska. This is a tremendous line-up and well worth attending this first collaboration between RBWF and the CRBS.

Professor, Nigel Leask will speak on: ‘Ploughman and Mechanics we’ - the Tarbolton Bachelor’s Club in Burns’ Poetic Development.

Novelist, Catherine Czerkawska will entertain us with: Jean Armour, the Jewel of them all? An exploration of Jean’s nature and thoughts about her relationship with Robert Burns and other matters.

There will be an opportunity to ask questions of the speakers and get books signed.
Memorable Wedding in Alloway’s Auld Kirk

Many Burnsians will know Gordon Ashley from Melbourne, Australia. Following the end of his parliamentary life as a member of the Victorian Parliament, Gordon turned his attention to writing and research – a switch that was to lead his discovering the particular significance of the Robert Burns statue in Camperdown.

Largely through his efforts, the significance of the statue and the outstanding contribution of Scots to the settlement and progress of Camperdown and district was brought to international attention and led to the magnificent Burns Festival now held annually in Camperdown.

A regular visitor to Scotland, Gordon and his partner Kirsty decided to get married in the Auld Kirk in Alloway, world famous as the setting for Burns’s masterpiece Tam o’ Shanter. Serendipity took centre stage when Federation Honorary Life Presidents John and Margaret Skilling just chanced to be walking past as the ceremony was taking place. As Gordon writes, “To have had an Alloway couple spontaneously emerge to witness our marriage certainly added an extra dimension to the occasion. I well realised what a risky adventure it was to arrange to be married outdoors in mid-September, but when the skies began to smile on us between 9.00am and 11.30am, it become increasingly apparent that this was one scheme that would not gang agley.

I do hope others come to realise what a lovely spot the auld kirk’s setting is for such occasions. Indeed, I’m rather surprised the Alloway church has not sensed how fabulous a spot it is. The church could well consider offering couples the option of a wedding in the church itself, or in the grounds of the auld kirk, with the re-assuring facility of a quick retreat to the shelter of the church should rain suddenly arrive.

Thank you, John, for offering to take some photographs, no easy task, when you're unfamiliar with a camera thrust into your hands at a moment’s notice. Kirsty and I are delighted the photograph includes Fraser Aitken who – as you might remember – was invited to deliver the oration at the unveiling of the Burns monument in Edmonton, Alberta in January 2000. On that occasion with the temperature at minus 20 degrees – and speaking of Robert Burns – Fraser told the shivering audience:

“Although he is the quintessential Scottish poet, he is also the universal poet. He was indeed the champion of ordinary people everywhere and, as their champion, he has made us ashamed of man's inhumanity to man. He has opened our eyes to the beauty of the natural world around; and he has shown us the pathos of the human situation.”"

Thornhill Burns Club Summer Outing

One of the summer events for the Thornhill & District Burns Club, was a visit to Creetown Gem Museum. Displayed were rare examples of crystals found in Britain and around the world.

There was also a visual presentation showing the creation of the minerals. The gift shop was a must to visit, then lunch in the tearoom before our journey home in the Thornhill Community bus. Everyone agreed it was an excellent day out, well worth the visit.
Friends of Ellisland Farm Supper

The Friends of Ellisland held their annual Farm Supper at Ellisland Farm on the 1st September and the barn was filled to capacity. The buffet was set out in the marquee and everyone remarked how much they enjoyed it. The entertainment commenced with the Chairman Russel Williamson introducing John Caskie MBE singing, accompanied by Willie McRobert on the accordion. Rose Byers sang and also played her fiddle. Tom Hughes brought a different type of entertainment to Ellisland by playing the Border pipes and storytelling. Jane Brown recited two hilarious poems and the evening ended in the usual way by everyone singing Auld Lang Syne.

In the photo from left to right. John Caskie MBE, Willie McRobert, Rose Byers, Russell Williamson, Tom Hughes and Jane Brown. (photo by Halina Cairns)

Edinburgh's Historic Buildings Open Days

On Saturday and Sunday 29 & 30th September 2018 the Burns Monument was opened as part of Edinburgh’s Historic buildings open days. On Saturday, Ragged Glory folk band started off the Entertainment and sang and played some great songs till after midday. I interspersed with Burns Poems, and was joined by Andrew Raeburn Secretary of the Edinburgh and District Burns Clubs Association. Ralph Balfour the Treasurer of the Edinburgh and District Burns Association (EDBCA) related the history of the Monument at intervals over the day.

After lunch Ragged Glory continued playing and we were delighted to welcome Clair Murdoch and her daughter Catriona, Clair presented wonderful Fiddle tunes and Catriona recited burns poems. We were joined by two sisters, Olive and Alice Bailey, who along with Catriona were Primary School Burns Competition Winners. As this is the year of the young people we had invited Primary School Burns winners to take part in the open days. The 3 girls were wonderful in their contribution to the day’s event, we continued reciting and singing Burns works over the rest of the afternoon until 4pm.

On Sunday morning I was joined with Ragged Glory Folk Band and Andrew Raeburn with Ian Buick Past President of the Borders Burns Clubs Association, providing poems over the day. We were joined by Stewart Davie on guitar who brought Neil Lee with his harmonica for music and songs. The afternoon entertainment was swelled when Emma Douglas a Primary School Burns Winner arrived to recite Burns poetry.

The young prize winners over the two days gave the Open Days a tremendous boost. Our hope is that they will carry forward a new generation of Burns singers, reciters and musicians. The day ended with all present joining hands and singing Auld Lang Syne.

Gwen Thomas, Conservation Officer for the City of Edinburgh Council, was delighted with the success of the Monument’s open days with 730 visitors over the two days. (Gordon Jamieson. President EDBCA)
**Burns Howff Club Honours Past President**

There was widespread pleasure when the Burns Howff Club’s Executive Committee agreed to confer an honorary membership on Stewart Tweedie, the club’s senior surviving past president.

Stewart (on the right) served with distinction as president in 1970-71 and has been a tower of strength to the club ever since. As he does not enjoy the best of health at the moment, President Bill Graham (on left) and Hon. Secretary David Smith called at his home, Woodside Farm near New Abbey, where Bill presented his certificate.

Stewart, who was delighted with the gesture, spent a fascinating hour reminiscing of his early days in the club and the characters such as Provost Ernie Robertson, Dr. George Stirling, David Miller (senior) and others who made the Burns Howff Club great.

**A Chance Meeting at Burns Conference**

Heather Scott resident in Holland was visiting Ayrshire with her father (94 years old) on a special mission. They wanted to visit the grave of her late Uncle Bill (Willie) Morrison (left) and pay a visit to Willie’s wife, still living at Newmilns.

By coincident they had booked into the Riverside Lodge Hotel when the Federation Conference was taking place. Heather and her father have been very dear friends of Willie for more than 40 years. Over the years Willie shared and inspired them greatly about the life, poems, and songs of Robert Burns.

Heather took the opportunity to ask some delegates who were fellow guests in the hotel, if they maybe still remembered Bill Morrison who had been well known in Burns’ circles. After her question she was directed to the nearest Morrison - Murdo Morrison.

Heather had, in Holland, a copy of a certificate presented to her uncle Bill in 2007. When she e-mailed a copy, Murdo saw that the signatory was Angus Middleton and the certificate - probably designed by Anne Gaw - was from the Ayrshire Association of Burns Clubs of which Angus was the President.

Angus added another important piece of the jigsaw and asked Murdo to contact Past President Jim Gibson who had indeed recorded Bill. Jim is going to provide copies of the recording and these will certainly be treasured by Heather Scott.

**Ellisland’s Exciting Programme of Events**

Look out for upcoming events at Ellisland Farm including a ‘Young Trad Christmas Concert’ on 8th December, a ‘Grand Swishing Event’ on 2nd November where you can swap clothes and a ‘Willow Weaving Workshop on 24th November. All the details are at: [https://www.ellislandfarm.co.uk/news/](https://www.ellislandfarm.co.uk/news/)

There is also a Saint Andrew’s Dinner (with an Italian twist) on Saturday 24th November with Principal Speaker Mr. Boyd Tunnock of the famous Tunnocks biscuit makers of Uddingston.
Pacific Rim Clubs AGM

The Robert Burns Association of the Pacific Rim held their AGM in the Celtic Metropolitan Hotel, North Melbourne on Sat 6th Oct. The AGM was very successful with 14 members in attendance representing Fremantle Burns Club, Robert Burns Club of Melbourne, Camperdown Burns Club and Dunedin Burns Club New Zealand. Unfortunately Jim Millar from the Bendigo Caledonian Society and Burns Club was unable to attend. Greetings from Bill Nolan (President RBWF), Ken Montgomery (President of RBANA) and Athol Chalmers (Canberra Highland Society and Burns Club) were warmly received. Jim O’Lone was installed as the new President taking over from Royden Somerville of the Dunedin Burns Club, South Island, New Zealand.

On the Sunday morning a trip to Werribee Park Mansion where a tour and lunch was organised by Noel Wright for the members. The exquisite 60-room Italianate Mansion built at Werribee Park from 1874 to 1877 was a testament to the successful partnership between Scottish squatters Thomas and Andrew Chirnside. The pioneering brothers were a driving force behind early settlement in the region, all of which evolved from humble beginnings. Overall a very pleasant weekend was had by all. Jim O’Lone (Pres Robert Burns Association of the Pacific Rim)

From left to right in the photograph: Dr Royden J. Somerville QC (Dunedin New Zealand, immediate past president of the Pacific Rim), Daisy Lynch (Melbourne Burns Club), Chris and Christine Maguire (Camperdown Burns Club, Treasurer Pacific Rim), Dr John Menzies (Camperdown Burns Club), Jim O’Lone (Fremantle Burns Club, President Pacific Rim), Noel Wright (Melbourne Burns Club), Bill and Lorraine Schrank (Melbourne Burns Club), Bev Tait (Melbourne Burns Club, Secretary Pacific Rim), Marion Wright (Melbourne Burns Club), Bill and Ina Graham (Melbourne Burns Club) (Photograph, Mike Lynch)

Challenging New Quiz Book Created

Jamie Chapman of Chapman’s Butchers in Lanarkshire sponsored the publication of a new Burns Quiz Book. Murdo Morrison, President of Allanton Jolly Beggars Burns Club, and the author of the book, was impressed with Jamie’s knowledge of Robert Burns.

There are 21 "quiz" pages and the strength of the book is that, unless you know all the poems intimately, you will have to read the poems which are all contained in the book. For ease of photocopying by any Club, the pages are in A4 size

The Book is available for sale via the Federation Web Site at a cost of £5.00 plus postage.

Photo: Douglas Silvester
Pupils Awarded Their Essay Prizes

In early October each year The Association for Scottish Literary Studies (ASLS) holds a Schools’ Conference - a vital resource for teachers wishing to explore Scottish literature and language in the classroom.

As part of this year’s Conference, held at Glasgow University on Saturday 6th October, winners of the annual essay competition, run jointly by the ASLS and the RBWF, were presented with their cash prizes and certificates. There were 28 entries from as far afield as Aboyne Academy in the north and Lockerbie Academy in the south.

The winners were: 1st Katie Kelly, Lockerbie Academy; 2nd Rachel Kerr, Denny High School; and 3rd Equal Jake Maxwell and Rhys Livingstone, Castlehead High School, Paisley.

Judge John Hodgart writes, “This was the 17th year of the ASLS / RBWF Young Writers short story competition, with 30 entries from across the country, Writers are invited to submit a story of their own choice, written in any of Scotland’s languages. It was judged by Jean Hillhouse and myself and we had a gey hard job as the standard was very high.

Obituary - Past President George Anderson

The Burns Federation lost one of its most loyal members with the passing of past President George Anderson who died quietly at home on 26th Sept 2018. Born in 1937, George grew up in Rutherglen and enjoyed the Life boys and Boys Brigade. He married his first wife Maureen in 1960 with sons Graeme and Derek completing the happy family. Sadly, Maureen became terminally ill and George selflessly devoted his time to look after her whilst working 12 hour shifts to provide the family income.

A lithographic printer by profession, George worked indefatigably as the Federation’s Publicity Officer for many years before becoming President in 1982-83. Like Burns, he became an ardent Freemason and at the age of 23, in 1960, he became a member of the Glasgow Masonic Burns Club, thus combining his two lifelong interests. In 1968 he became his club's representative to the Glasgow and District Burns Association (G&DBA) and thereafter he moved rapidly up the hierarchy of the Association.

On the international scene George played a prominent part in the early Burns Suppers in Russia proposing the 'Immortal Memory' in Leningrad and Moscow and broadcast on Soviet radio and television about Burns. Nearer home, he was a tireless worker for the furtherance of the Burns movement at all levels, whether it be proposing the 'Immortal Memory,' judging children's poetry competitions, or keeping Burns in the forefront of the cultural developments in Scotland. It was through his involvement with the Robert Burns movement that he met and married his soul mate Enez 27 years ago. She herself is a prominent figure in the Burns movement currently being President of the G&DBA. It was highly appropriate that George and Enez were made Honorary Presidents of the Robert Burns World Federation at the 2013 annual conference.

At the age of 45 George had become the Federation’s youngest President, and was particularly proud of the fact that this honour had come to him in the Centenary Year of the Boys Brigade, through whose ranks he rose to become an officer. George once commented, 'I do not think it incorrect to say that, but for my Brigade training, I would never have become President of the Burns Federation.'
Norwegian Member Impressed by Irvine Conference

One of the keenest participants in the conference was Alf Ingum from Norway. On returning home he offered the following reflection on the event: “The conference in Irvine was a great experience for me. As I’ve said before, it is quite lonesome to be a Burns admirer in Norway (Beverley Thomson informed me that I’m the only RBWF member from my country!) Therefore it was very special for me in Irvine, meeting so many kind and interesting Burns friends. A well organized and interesting conference. And the guided visit to Wellwood Burns Museum was really memorable. I hope to be back next year!”

[One motivation for Alf’s love of Scotland is his interest in whisky, exemplified by the fact that he has visited every one of the 120-odd distilleries across the length and breadth of the country and has samples from all of them. Ed]

At the wreath-laying ceremony at the Burns statue in Irvine Alf had a chance to make friends with a beautiful Clydesdale horse and have his photograph taken beside the Marymass Queen and her attendants. They had just taken part in the wonderful service of worship in the Irvine Old Parish Church led by Rev Neil Urquhart, attended by several of the civic organisations of the town.

Marymass Festival has been celebrated in Irvine for centuries and is recognised locally and nationally as a major event that annually attracts thousands of visitors during a 12-day period in mid-August. Based historically on a medieval religious festival and local horse fair, Marymass now incorporates the ancient ceremonial ‘Riding of the Marches’ – namely, the Four Ports of the former Royal Burgh of Irvine – by the Irvine Carters Society who also celebrate the event with Horse Racing on the Town’s Moor. Marymass has developed over the years into a major multifaceted community event incorporating several core events, including the Crowning of the Marymass Queen, in memory of Mary Queen of Scots, and her alleged visit to Irvine, and one of the UK’s longest-running Folk Music Festivals.

Digitisation of the Burns Chronicle - Update

One of the most exciting developments in the project to digitise all the Burns Chronicles is the addition of an index compiled by past President Bill Dawson in 2005. This will appear on the Federation’s website alongside the digitised chronicles and will provide an invaluable tool for members to find particular topics of interest. As Bill produced this volume at his own expense it is a generous gesture on his part to allow the index to be made available.

Please contact the Federation office to pledge £50 per volume giving exact details of whom you wish to see as the sponsor on the dedication page. Payment should also be made directly to the Federation office with cheques being made payable to RBWF Ltd. The office holds a record of which chronicles have already been sponsored but this can also be seen by going to the RBWF website clicking on the ‘Resources’ tab and following the link to ‘Digitised Chronicles.’ Under the same tab there is a list of contents pages which is designed to help you locate particular articles of interest.

Follow the link below to access this fantastic resource: [http://www.rbwf.org.uk/digitised-chronicles/](http://www.rbwf.org.uk/digitised-chronicles/)
The Globe Inn, Robert Burns' favourite “howff”, was packed on the evening of 18th September for the thirtieth running of the “Tam o’ Shanter” reciting competition organised by Dumfries Ladies Burns Club No.1.

Six “Tams” from all over the world were welcomed by club president Dr. Ruth Thomson. Each had their own interpretation of Burns’ famous tale but, at the end, Michael Kay from London (photo left) was declared winner with Richard Smith of Falkirk 2nd and Bill Cox from Medicine Hat Canada 3rd. The other competitors were Douglas Smith from Falkirk, Peter Maclean from Airdrie and Robert Carruthers from Alloa.

Principal Judge, Brian Goldie, Senior Vice-President of the Robert Burns World Federation, praised all six competitors and admitted that choosing the winner was a difficult task. The other judges were Dr. Maureen Milton, Secretary of Friends of Ellisland, and last year’s winner Lex Muir from Newton Stewart.

The trophy was presented by John Caskie, MBE, past President of Burns Howff Club. John also sang and proposed a vote of thanks to the competitors, judges, the chairman Dr. Thomson, Dumfries Ladies Burns Club No.1, not forgetting the Globe Inn staff, before a spirited rendition of “Auld Lang Syne” brought the evening to a close.

Of special note it was the thirtieth competition organised by Betty Haining (right) in her role as Secretary of the Dumfries Ladies Burns Club No 1, a role she has now handed over to Shona Shaw.

**Visit to Scotland by the Winners of the ‘Knowledge of Scotland’ Competition**

Sasha Yeranin – 16 years – attends Northern Venice School in St Petersburg. His topic was ‘John Paul Jones’.

Anastasia Grigoreva – 15 years – school 61. Her topic was ‘The house by the Dvina’.

Elizaveta Tokareva – 17 years – school 46. Her topic was the ‘Scottish and Leningrad Albums’.

[Photo: L to R Anastasia, President Bill Nolan, Sasha, and Elizaveta taken in the Globe Inn, Dumfries]

The prize for winning the competition is ten days in Scotland hosted by Elizabeth & Tom Clark assisted by Kay Blair, Gordon Johnstone and Helen Morrison – Trustees of St Petersburg Forum.

The students all attend different schools and before the competition are strangers so after a few quick rehearsals to become familiar which each other’s text we headed, on Friday, for Alloway where they were hosted by Tracy & Andy Moynihan and Beth Kerr of Alloway Burns Club. After a Burns tour they performed their winning presentations to an Ayrshire audience.

Saturday was spent in Falkirk and Stirling where they visited Stirling Castle, Wallace monument, David Stirling memorial, Doune Castle, the Kelpies and the Falkirk wheel.
Winners of the ‘Knowledge of Scotland’ Competition (cont’d)

On Sunday we were joined by Kay and headed for Dumfries and Gordon’s cottage at Southerness. The afternoon was spent at John Paul Jones cottage where Sasha performed for the Trustees of the cottage. In the evening an excellent evening of entertainment had been arranged by Gordon Johnstone and Jane Brown in Burns’s favourite hostelry, the Globe Inn. Their performances were well received – as was the haggis! After a night at Gordon & Betty’s cottage they toured the Robert Burns attractions in Dumfries and visited the Camera Obscura in perfect weather conditions.

After a quick dash back to Bridge of Weir they attended Paisley Callants Rotary club, where they once again performed their presentations. Their talents were becoming more apparent and more performances were added – violin, singing and piano solos.

On Tuesday we headed to Portnadvadie Marina for an overnight stay on Tom & Elizabeth’s yacht. The intention was to have a sail and view the beautiful Scottish scenery. However it rained for two days and visibility was nil. The time was spent in the swimming pool and learning new card tricks. The highlight on the Wednesday was fish suppers eaten with fingers!

On Thursday we joined Kay and Helen in Airdrie where they performed their pieces for the provost. Elizaveta was delighted to see the copy of the Leningrad Album - her winning topic. Anastasia also had a surprise when Michael Fraser son of her topic, Eugenie Fraser, arrived to see her performance about his mother. Both were in tears! The afternoon was spent touring Lanarkshire with Kay and Helen.

On Friday Geoffrey and Maggie Depledge hosted the students and took them on an adventure to the Trossachs – Geoffrey had to join them swinging through the trees because of Anastasia’s young age! In the evening Marc Sherland and Geoffrey organised a joint concert in Glasgow with some young Scottish talent.

Saturday was a day of last minute shopping, lunch at the Glenlee – transport museum – and packing. In the evening we were joined by our 'St Petersburg' cronies for a final get together. Everyone in the room performed – some several times over as the queue to perform lengthened. A real Ceilidh!! Robert Burns would have been proud!

Helen Morrison has been involved with Schools Committee since Anne Gaw was Convener in the early nineties and coordinator of St Petersburg Literature Competition since 2004

Helen has passed on the following message: “Due to personal and family circumstances I have had to relinquish both duties and I just wanted to pass on my sincere thanks to all Past School Convener and Schools' Committee Members for their support in my role as Minute Secretary and St Petersburg Coordinator as I stand down and wish them all the very best for the future. Love Helen"

[She has done a fantastic job over so many years and I’m sure both committees will miss her cheery smile, boundless energy and organisational ability. Her fund-raising skills in particular will be extremely hard to replace and it can only be hoped that students from St Petersburg will continue to have the opportunity to come to Scotland.
Patrick Scott writes: “The published copies arrived this past week of a new book I’ve been working on for most of the year. The book tells the story of Burns’s life and poetry by collecting primary source materials on the life, contemporary descriptions of the places he lived, his reading, his writing and how it was published, the first reviews, on till the first obituaries, posthumous editions, and some early accounts of visiting the Cottage. Mixed in with specifically Burnsian items is contextual material on such topics as Ayrshire agriculture, the law-suit against his father, the minutes of the Mauchline kirk session, the duties of an excise officer, song-editing, the sedition trials in the 1790’s, the regulations of the Dumfries Volunteers, and much else.

In large format, with over 300 documents and extracts, the book includes 34 manuscript facsimiles, 45 sidebars on special topics, 10 maps, and over 100 supporting illustrations. Many of the manuscripts and other illustrations come from the G. Ross Roy Collection at the University of South Carolina.

The aim is that newcomers will find an accessible introduction to Burns, and that even seasoned Burnsians will find, along with familiar material, items that are new to them. The Dictionary of Literary Biography volumes, which involve significant in-house editing and design, are expensive for most individuals. However, the series is available in many U.S. (and a few Scottish) public and university libraries, in hardback or through library subscriptions to the online version. Other libraries buy individual volumes, especially if enough library patrons ask for them.”
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