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Bill Dewson
EDITOR

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The mission of the *Chronicle* remains the furtherance of knowledge about Robert Burns and its publication in a form that is both academically responsible and clearly communicated for the broader Burnsian community.

In reviewing, and helping prospective contributors develop, suitable articles to fulfil this mission, the Editor now has the support of an Editorial Advisory Board. Articles submitted for consideration will normally be read both by the Editor for general suitability and by a relevant Advisory Board member or other specialist, who can provide any needed feedback about the submission. Academic contributors whose institutions require that publications be formally refereed should notify the Editor at the time of submission so he can ensure the regular review procedure is appropriately implemented. To allow time for appropriate feedback, contributors are asked to submit articles before June 30 each year for the forthcoming volume.

The Editor is always pleased to discuss proposals for articles with potential contributors. The preferred length for full articles is between 1500 and 5000 words, and the Editor also welcomes shorter notes, especially when based on primary source materials. References should be kept simple, and as far as possible included in the text. Contributors are asked to contact the Editor ahead of submission if their proposed article differs significantly from these guidelines.

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**Written on a One Guinea Note**

The front cover of this edition of the Burns Chronicle shows an illustration of the Bank of Scotland One Guinea note, on the reverse of which Burns wrote these famous lines;

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Wae worth thy pow’r, thou cursed leaf!} \\
\text{Fell source of all my woe and grief!} \\
\text{Far Lake o’ thee I’ve lost my lass;} \\
\text{For lake o’ thee I scrimp my glass;} \\
\text{I see the children of Affliction} \\
\text{Unaided, thro thy curst restriction;} \\
\text{I’ve seen th’ Oppressor’s cruel smile} \\
\text{Amid his hapless victim’s spoil;} \\
\text{And for thy potence vainly wish’d} \\
\text{To crush the Villain in the dust:} \\
\text{For lake o’ thee I leave this much-lov’d shore,} \\
\text{Never perhaps to greet old Scotland more!}
\end{align*}
\]

R. B. Kyle.

Written in 1786 while he was planning a potential emigration, as indicated in the last two lines of this poem. The loss of his lass in line three referred to the estrangement with Jean Armour brought about by her father’s poor opinion of the penniless farmer poet. Burns wrote the lines on the back of this Bank of Scotland One Guinea note that briefly passed through his hands. The note is in the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum in Alloway.

The use of this image for the cover of this edition is inspired by the scholarly article which follows on Burns financial position over the last few years of his life. This subject has often been discussed in the Burns Chronicle and now we have the pleasure of a detailed study which calls on much wider references than those previously aired to illuminate Burns wealth — or lack of it.

Facsimiles of the banknote, rear and face, are given at the end of the article, page 29 and 30. Illustrations are used courtesy of the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum.
Burns and the Bank Manager
Robert Burns in the Shadow of the Debtors’ Prison
Clark McGinn

For over two hundred years Robert Burns’s biographers have debated the state of the poet’s debts and his care or carelessness for his family’s financial future. Did Burns have good cause to fear that he might die in the debtors’ prison? Was he merely temporarily short of cash, or illiquid, possibly because of a recent period of incapacity or had he been consistently living beyond his income, having become structurally indebted? And if he were financially embarrassed, could he call upon valuable assets or resources to correct that imbalance or did he owe more than he could raise and was effectively insolvent? Previously unanalysed papers in the National Records of Scotland allow the use of banking credit methodology to augment current scholarship to enable a factual assessment of Burns’s finances and a determination as to whether the worries the poet faced, or thought he faced, in his final illness were justified.1

Robert Burns had never known wealth; a decade before his early death as he stood in poverty facing emigration to Jamaica, he wrote a despairing poem on the reverse of a Guinea note:

Wae worth thy pow’r, thou cursed leaf!
Fell source of all my woe and grief!
For lake o’ thee I’ve lost my lass;
For lake o’ thee I scrimp my glass;
I see the children of Affliction
Unaided, thro’ thy curst restriction;
I’ve seen th’ Oppressor’s cruel smile
Amid his hapless victim’s spoil;
And for thy potence vainly wish’d
To crush the Villain in the dust:
For lake o’ thee I leave this much-lov’d shore,
Never perhaps to greet old Scotland more!

R.B. – Kyle.2

Ten years later, weeks before the anniversary of his Kilmarnock edition and with his wife imminently expecting their last child, the poet

---

1 Edinburgh, National Records of Scotland [NRS], CS97/Box 101/15 (‘Transcript of the State of Gilbert Burns’s Acceptance to Mr Burns’ Estate’) [Report], accessible online at http://www.nas.gov.uk/documents/burnslegacy.pdf.

exhibited similar concerns over his finances, this time in the face of death not diaspora. The receipt of a letter requesting settlement of an outstanding bill for his volunteer uniform troubled Burns sufficiently for him to seek to raise cash at once. Although physically weak, he collected his final salary payment in person and wrote urgent letters trying to call in a debt and to his cousin and his collaborator begging each of them for relatively small sums to avoid imprisonment for debt:

*After all my boasted independence, curst necessity compels me to implore you for five pounds. – A cruel scoundrel of a Haberdasher to whom I owe an account, taking it into his head that I am dying, has commenced a process & will infallibly put me into jail. – Do, for God's sake, send me that sum, & that by return of post. – Forgive me this earnestness, but the horrors of a jail have made me half distracted.*

James Burness and George Thomson replied helpfully but Burns died before their letters were delivered. Both men were happy to send money but both felt that the poet was overwrought and in no real danger of the debtors' prison and further than that Alexander Cunningham's announcement of Burns's death in the Edinburgh papers alluding to Jean being left 'in circumstances of extreme distress' was unnecessarily overstated. The combination of Burns's letters and the Cunningham notice raised questions his first and subsequent biographers would have to address.

**Biographers' Assessments of Burns's Financial Position**

As with many arguments about the detail of Burns's personal life the ground is set by his first biographer James Currie with the twentieth-century biographer James Mackay on the opposite side of the debate. Currie wrote in 1800 that while Burns was short of cash he had avoided falling into wholesale indebtedness:

*Burns died in great poverty; but the independence of his spirit, and the exemplary prudence of his wife, had preserved him from debt. He had received from his poems a clear profit of about nine hundred pounds. Of this sum,*

---


4 Burns, Letters, ii. 389 [L.706]. Thomson annotated his letter from Burns: 'This idea is exaggerated—he could not have been in any such danger', and repeated (and was perhaps self-serving) in defending Burns's financial position: see for example: George Thomson to John Wilson, 14 Jul. 1819, who wrote 'although his income from the Excise did not exceed from £40 to £70 a year he died without being £5 in debt', Glasgow, Mitchell Library [ML], MS Cowie Collection, Envelope 18. Also, Edinburgh Advertiser, 26 Jul. 1796.
part expended on his library (which was far from extensive) and in the humble furniture of his house remained; and obligations were found for two hundred pounds advanced by him to the assistance of those to whom he was united by the ties of blood, and still more by those of esteem and affection. When it is considered that his expenses in Edinburgh, and on his various journeys, could not be very inconsiderable; that his agricultural undertaking was unsuccessful; that his income from the Excise was for some time as low as fifty, and never rose to above seventy pounds a year; that his family was large, and his spirit liberal—no one will he surprised that his circumstances were so poor, or that, as his health decayed, his proud and feeling heart sank under the secret consciousness of indigence, and the apprehensions of absolute want.\(^5\)

Burns's friends could not silence the nagging tone of early commentators like Robert Heron who remained critical of ‘the circumstances of want in which [Burns] left his family’ although John Gibson Lockhart, so often fault-finding as the poet's biographer, positively believed that ‘Burns was an honest man: after all his struggles, he owed no man a shilling when he died.’\(^6\) Walter Scott's assessment was bleaker: ‘[Burns was] so poor, as even to be on the very brink of absolute ruin’ which was an assertion Burns's friend John Syme directly refuted, attributing Burns's money concerns at the end of his life as mere ‘blue Devils’ or as Hans Hecht later called it, 'morbid exaggeration.'\(^7\) It was the methodical Robert Chambers who probed deeper in 1851 finding that the poet did have several outstanding creditors but apparently in quantum significantly below the value of his assets:

> It has been repeatedly stated in so many words that Burns died free of debt. This even by his own confession (Letter to his brother, July 10, 1796) is not strictly true . . . . . . besides the amount of the unfortunate account which had been presented at so unsuiting a time; he had small accounts due to other tradesmen. The poet would also appear to have never quite succeeded in squaring accounts with his landlord . . . . I deem it probable, after all, that the total amount of our poet’s debts did not much exceed thirty pounds.\(^8\)

When the Burnsophile Duncan McNaught reviewed some contemporary documents for the 1900 Burns Chronicle he calculated ‘the total amount of

---

6 Robert Heron, A Memoir of the Life of Robert Burns (Edinburgh, 1797), 44; John Gibson Lockhart, Life of Burns (Edinburgh, 1828), 292.
8 Robert Chambers, Life and Works of Burns, 4 vols (Edinburgh, 1851), iv. 221.
the poet’s debts is £14 15s., thus leaving a free balance of £170 for the widow and children. It was that research which led to Franklyn B. Snyder’s 1929 view that while Burns did have cashflow problems as he lay dying, his overall position remained financially secure:

[Burns] was laboring under considerable financial embarrassment. His income seems never to have risen above £90 or £100 per year, and his family was steadily growing larger. With characteristic generosity, however, he endorsed a friend’s note, and paid it, though he ran into debt to his landlord, Captain Hamilton, in order to do so. But he managed before long to square the account with Hamilton, and throughout the Dumfries period as a whole he lived – as he always had done – within his income. Even at his death he owed only some ten pounds, to balance which there was something more than two hundred pounds to him.10

James Mackay used McNaught’s papers and Snyder’s analysis to posit the positive case against Currie in his 1992 biography. He summarised the positive case:

The poet’s debts amounted to £14 15s. .......... His assets amounted to drafts for £15, a library valued at £90 and the indebtedness of brother Gilbert to the tune of £183 16s. 7d. The notion that Burns died a pauper is therefore quite ridiculous – yet it persists to this day.11

As the best current biography of Burns, The Bard by Robert Crawford, focuses on the poetical debts of Burns rather than the quotidian debits, so Mackay’s viewpoint remains widely held as can be seen in the 2009 revision of Ian McIntyre’s 1995 biography which dismissively claims that Burns’s fear of ‘pauperdom had been a phantom’. Effectively, Currie’s financial analysis, which was based on correspondence with Burns’s friends, was seen as being as over-censorious as his criticism of the poet’s drinking. Just as some of the poet’s supporters were to protest against the characterisation of Burns as an alcoholic, so McNaught’s paper was used to justify a more cautious assessment of his fiscal prudence. This broadly remains the position held academically and across Immortal Memory speeches.12

However, further data can be found in the legal reports and accounts entitled ‘State of Gilbert Burns’s Acceptance to Mr Burns’ Estate’, a source

9 Duncan McNaught, ‘Documents bearing on Gilbert’s debt to the Poet’, Annual Burns Chronicle and Club Directory, 1900, Series 1, ix. 77–90, at 78.
10 F. B. Snyder, ‘Burns’s Last Years’, Studies in Philology 26 (1929) 466.
11 James Mackay, Burns: A biography of Robert Burns (Darvel, 2004), 632.
which allows a banker to assess Burns’s financial position as at July 1796 by establishing his historical pattern of income and expenditure and also by calculating the surplus of value in the assets he owned after deducting his liabilities owed to others (his ‘tangible net worth’). For the first time, analysis of these new data will show definitively whether Burns had just cause for concern about his financial state on his deathbed.

Burns’s Outstanding Debts at 21 July 1796

Under Scots Law, then as now, children have inalienable rights to a portion of their parents’ estates. Burns’s surviving legitimate offspring therefore shared an interest in their father’s net assets, including the copyright to his poems and the debt owed by their Uncle Gilbert. As both of these would be challenging to monetise, and given Gilbert’s conflict of interest as both the children’s nearest male relative and the Estate’s largest creditor, a Dumfries writer William Thomson of Moat was appointed by the Court of Session as ‘Factor Loco Tutors’ for the Children of the deceased Robert Burns in Dumfries and Jean Armour his Spouse viz. Robert, Francis-Wallace, William-Nicol, James and Maxwell Burns’ at the request of four friends of Burns—John Syme, Alexander Cunningham, John McMurdo and William Maxwell. By the same legal process these four gentlemen were appointed by the Court to serve as the children’s trustees until each of the children attained legal maturity. With the assistance of Captain Patrick Miller of Dalswinton, they had taken it upon themselves to organise financial provision for the poet’s widow and surviving legitimate children. As part of the due process, Thomson of Moat itemised all Burns’s financial obligations at his death and from that it can be seen that the £14 15s. of total debt calculated by McNaught was based on an incomplete dossier, being a partial copy of the Report which only represented a subset of debts settled by the poet’s brother up to 1 September prior to Thomson’s appointment on 16 December 1796. In addition to McNaught’s sub-set of bills there were other tradesmen who had approached the Trustees or Thomson directly for payment. Summing all of these, Burns carried materially greater obligations than previously evidenced with open tradesman’s accounts and debts outstanding in

13 NRS, CS97/Box 101/15 (Report).
14 Ibid., Rubric 1.
15 Sir James Shaw and Sir Peter Laurie performed a similar function from London. After some rivalry, the Shaw funds were amalgamated under Thomson of Moat’s management.
excess of £100. For example, it was not just the uniform bill of £7 4s. Burns owed to Williamson, the outstanding account in total at the haberdasher’s was £38 5s., which was a significant credit risk.

While the poet was running up extensive credit accounts with local tradesmen, to a lesser extent the Report shows that he appears to have been no stranger to seeking small personal financial accommodations as there are references in Burns’s letters and in Syme’s papers to relatively modest personal debts which look to be short term bridges to cover cash needs within the six week cycle between his paydays. This pattern can be an indicator of a general habit of overspending or ‘anticipation’ in banking parlance.17 The largest of these seems to be a short-term six Guinea loan from John McMurdo which was repaid in early 1792 (at which point Burns claimed ‘now I don’t owe a shilling to man or WOMAN either’).18 His superior officer, the collector of customs in Dumfries, John Mitchell, also arranged (at least once) to make an advance against his assistant’s salary perhaps to cover expenses where the tradesman would not provide credit terms. Mitchell was prompted by Burns’s poem sent to him on 31 December 1795:

\[\begin{align*}
\text{Fu’ fain I, modestly, would hint it,} \\
\text{That ONE POUND, ONE, I sairly want it;} \\
\text{If wi’ the hizzie down ye sent it,} \\
\text{It would be kind;} \\
\text{And while my heart wi’ life-blood dunted,} \\
\text{I’d bear ’t in mind.}^{19}
\end{align*}\]

So in both Burns’s poems and his letters we see passing reference to his need to reach financial accommodation with both the town’s tradesmen and his friends. Using the data within the Report, we can, for the first time, obtain the true extent of Burns’s indebtedness:

The total extent of these debts is significantly more than any biographer has assessed and exceeded by far the cash resources held by Burns’s widow or brother. In the months after his brother’s death, Gilbert Burns was out of his depth in trying to arrange payment of his brother’s debts mainly due to his own poor finances.

---

17 Fitzhugh, ‘Burns’ later years’, 540.
19 Burns, Poems, ii. 804–5 [K.514, lines 7–12], ‘Poem Addressed to Mr Mitchell, Collector of Excise, Dumfries.’
Table 1: **Robert Burns’s debts outstanding at 21 July 1796**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Creditor</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Creditors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr Rae, Taylor (sic)</td>
<td>Trade Account</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Richardson, Butcher</td>
<td>Trade Account</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walter Scott</td>
<td>Trade Account</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Turner</td>
<td>Trade Account</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Lawson</td>
<td>Trade Account</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr McCorock</td>
<td>Trade Account</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Georgeson</td>
<td>Trade Account</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Chalmers</td>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Brown</td>
<td>Medical Bill</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Armor (sic) for cheese purchased in Mauchline</td>
<td>Claim</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Subtotal paid by Gilbert</em></td>
<td>14 15 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Williamson, Merchant</td>
<td>Trade Account</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Mary Nicolson, Merchant</td>
<td>Trade Account</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Messrs. Duncan &amp; Watson</td>
<td>Trade Account</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Clugston, Bookseller</td>
<td>Trade Account</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Wilson, Bookseller</td>
<td>Trade Account</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crosbie &amp; Jardine</td>
<td>Trade Account</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Hutton, Merchant</td>
<td>Trade Account</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Subtotal paid by the Trustees to tradesmen</em></td>
<td>49 8 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Gracie, Accountant</td>
<td>Debt (Note)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Stewart of Crosshill</td>
<td>Debt (Missive)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collector John Mitchell</td>
<td>Debt (No Note)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Subtotal paid by the Trustees to friends of the Poet</em></td>
<td>14 16 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captain John Hamilton</td>
<td>House Rent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxes</td>
<td>Overdue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Subtotal paid by the Trustees for house rental</em></td>
<td>24 1 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total debts due, owing or incurred:</strong></td>
<td><strong>£103 1s. 7d.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NRS, CS97/Box 101/15 (Report), 2–3, 176.

* NRS, CS97/Box 101/15 (Report), 51; McNaught, ‘Documents’; 84.

As Gilbert wrote to a local solicitor

*I intended [...] to have paid off my brother’s debts; but I find much difficulty in sparing as much money. I think of offering Captain Hamilton [Burns’s landlord] and Mr Williamson [the tailor] the half of their accounts and begging a little time to pay the other half. If Mr Clark pay up his bill, I hope to be able to pay off the smaller accounts. [...] I beg that you will smooth the way to me in this business as much as you can. I do feel much hurt at it; but, as I suppose the delay can be no great inconvenience to the gentlemen, I hope they will be indulgent to me.*

---

20 Gilbert Burns to William Wallace, 1 Jan. 1797, quoted in Chambers, *Life and Works*, iv. 221
Burns was fortunate in having a friendly and accommodative landlord in Captain John Hamilton who owned both of the houses where Burns’s family resided in Dumfries. Thomson of Moat records that a total amount of £22 17s. was paid to Hamilton in 1797/98 by the Trustees in settlement of the total overdue rentals. These calculations show that while Burns had met his rentals regularly in Wee Vennel, he had effectively never paid rental for the Mill Street house since moving there in May 1793.

The first rent-day had found Burns short of cash, partly through the expense of setting up house in town, but also due to the loss of £20 in a bad debt. This loan was made to Crombie, the builder of the farmhouse at Ellisland, when Burns accepted a bill of exchange from the builder dated 6 April 1791, payable three months after signature. As Burns had not paid his architect’s account to Thomas Boyd, he used Crombie’s bill as the currency of settlement instead of cash in June:

_As it is high time that the account between you & me were settled, if you will take a bill of Mr Alex[ande]r Crombie's to me for twenty pounds in part, I will settle with you immediately [...] as you owe him and I owe you._

What Burns forgot (and Mackay misses) is that every party to a bill of exchange remains liable on it until it is paid in full and cancelled. So if Crombie failed to pay Boyd (or if Boyd had rediscounted the bill a further time to raise cash himself) the holder of the bill could still ‘protest’ it against the poet if Crombie (or Boyd) did not pay. Burns would be obliged to pay whoever had valid title to the paper, effectively having guaranteed Crombie. Hence Burns’s loss of £20 has a possible explanation three years later when he needed it to pay his rental to Hamilton.

After friendly correspondence in the following March, Hamilton allowed Burns to pay £5 in cash and the balance in kind (agreed as a ‘quey calf’ worth 10s. and a ‘bed and press’ commissioned at £1 13s.). Burns ingenuously told his landlord: ‘You are the only person in Dumfries or in the world, to whom I have run into debt.’ Unfortunately that was simply untrue and the pressures on Burns’s purse meant that the only subsequent payment of rent was three Guineas towards the Whitsun 1794 payment made late in January 1795. That sum had been borrowed by Burns after

21 Mackay, Burns, 441.
22 Burns, Letters, ii. 96 [L.458]: Robert Burns to Thomas Boyd, 16 Jun. 1791.
23 Mackay, Burns, 532
24 For a discussion of the banking mechanics of Bills of Exchange see; Clark McGinn ‘Trollope And The Bill Of Exchange’Trollopiana 21 (1993)
writing a ‘painful, disagreeable letter’ to William Stewart which he claimed to be ‘the first [letter] of this kind I ever wrote. – I am truly in serious distress for three or four guineas,’ and the cash Stewart dispatched features in the inventory of post mortem debts above.27 Reconstructing the account between Hamilton and Burns from the Report gives the following:

Table 2: Burns’s account with Captain Hamilton

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Due Whitsun</th>
<th>Annual Rental</th>
<th>Paid Cash</th>
<th>Outstanding Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£</td>
<td>s.</td>
<td>d.</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1793</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1794</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1795</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1796</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1797</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1798</td>
<td>(22)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1799</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Settled by the Factor: (22 17 0)

Source: NRS, CS97/Box 101/15 (Report), 118, 165 176; Burns, Letters, ii, 290 [L.620C]; ii, 303 [L.633]; ii, 338 [L.653]; ii, 339 [L.655]; ii, 338 [L653(3)].

Mackay says without quoting a primary source that the Burns family’s annual rental was set at £8 against a market rental of £10 or £12.28 The receipts show that Thomson of Moat paid the rentals shown in Table 2 for 1798, 1799 and 1800, and the calculations support the assumption that the rental in years 1793 to 1797 were the same £6 10s. Hamilton appears to have been doubly generous in not pressing for payment of an overdue and under-market rental.

The data in the Report clearly show that Burns was significantly indebted at the time of his death, to an extent materially higher than any previous commentator had believed.

Burns’s Income and Expenditure

How had Burns got into this overextended position? Simply put, his expenditure exceeded his income: as he joked to Peter Hill he had been living under ‘the supreme curse of making three guineas do the business of

27 Burns, Letters, ii. 338 [L.653]: Robert Burns to John Hamilton, 29 Jan. 1795; ii. 339 [L.655]: Robert Burns to John Hamilton, 31 Jan. 1795; ii. 338 [L652]: Robert Burns to William Stewart of Closeburn, 15 Jan. 1795. Stewart annotated the filed letter: ‘This day forwarded and enclosed in a letter to Mr Burns £3 3s st[er]r[ling] and for which I hold no security in writing 16 January’ G. Ross Roy speculates( BurnsLetters, ii. 337–8) from a similar fragment that Burns may have sent letter(s) to other correspondents with the same request.

28 Mackay, Burns, 532–3.
Dumfries at that time was a comfortable place to live. The Statistical Account described it as ‘a society, amongst whom a person of a moderate fortune may spend his days, with as much satisfaction and enjoyment, as, perhaps, in any part of these kingdoms.’ While the poet had no such ‘moderate fortune’, Burns ensured that Jean and his family enjoyed that satisfied lifestyle. Robert Junior looked back on that period:

*The house in Mill Street was of a good order, such as were occupied at that time by the better class of burgesses; and his father and mother led a life that was comparatively genteel. They always had a maid servant, and sat in their parlour. That apartment, together with two bedrooms, was well furnished and carpeted; and when good company assembled, which was often the case, the hospitable board which they surrounded was of a patrician mahogany. There was much rough comfort in the house, not to have been found in those of ordinary citizens ...... he possibly was as much envied by some of his neighbours as he has since been pitied by the general body of his countrymen.*

As part of that genteel lifestyle Burns was keen to have his wife appropriately dressed. Jessie Lewars recalled that Jean was one of the first women in the town to wear gingham which was then ‘rather costly, and almost exclusively used by persons of superior conditions.’ No doubt that frock could be found on Williamson’s accumulating account. Without reading the Report, we still know that Burns could be dilatory in settling bills (it took two years to settle the account of £5 10s. for Fergusson’s gravestone and about the same interval to pay 10s. for the newspaper advert calling the Ellisland roup.) The Burns family kept up that comfortable lifestyle by financing through trade credit with shopkeepers.

At his death he had fifteen such accounts with aggregate debit balances of over £60: a sum greater than his annual base salary. So when Burns remonstrates in his letters that it is unusual and painful for him to owe a debt, he appears to have adopted the approach of a PG Wodehouse boulevardier: ‘I don’t owe a penny to a single soul – not counting tradesmen, of course.’

---

29 Burns, Letters, ii. 65 [L.430]: Robert Burns to Peter Hill, 17 Jan. 1791 (this is broadly the proportion of shortfall calculated in Table 4).
31 Chambers, Life and Works, iv. 225.
32 Mackay, Burns, 625.
33 Burns, Letters, ii. 133 [L.495]: Robert Burns to Peter Hill, 5 Feb. 1792; Mackay, Burns 512.
34 P. G. Wodehouse, Carry On Jeeves (London, 1982), 76.
Table 3a: The Burns family’s household expenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>s.</th>
<th>d.</th>
<th>Monthly average</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>s.</th>
<th>d.</th>
<th>Increase</th>
<th>Inflation*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 1796 – March 1798</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>(−11%)</td>
<td>20 months estimate 14 months estimate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1798 – May 1799</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+21%</td>
<td>+11%</td>
<td>14 months Audited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1799 – May 1800</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>+28%</td>
<td>+26%</td>
<td>12 months Audited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1800 – May 1801</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>+14%</td>
<td>+10%</td>
<td>12 months Audited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>£396</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0d</td>
<td>£6</td>
<td>16s</td>
<td>7d</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>58 months Audited</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


We have no expenditure data for the period leading up to Burns’s death, but looking at the details of Thomson of Moat’s three years of audited accounts (March 1798 to May 1801) in Table 3a, it is clear that the household expenses for Jean and the children typically exceeded the level of Burns’s salary when alive, so it is a fair assumption that this level of expense was the basis of the family budget during the previous years. Using the Report’s detail their household expenditure can be calculated.

The period between 21 July 1796 (Burns’s death) and 1 March 1798 (when Thomson of Moat’s detailed records start) is more conjectural, but calculating the recorded financial support given to Jean Armour Burns during that time gains an insight into the expenditure incurred (in this case, excluding funerary costs and assuming that the tradesmen’s debts paid by Gilbert or the Trustees were allocated to the previous period).
Table 3b: Financial support to Jean Armour Burns—July 1796 to March 1798

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of income/support</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>s.</th>
<th>d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Final Excise pay</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Wallace (net of funeral expenses)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Burness (plus interest)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Thomson (plus interest)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Burness (second remittance)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graham of Fintry</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gilbert Burns (cash)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gilbert Burns (in cheese)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow’s annuity: Excise Relief Fund (pro rata to March 1798)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House rental settled by Factor (pro rata to March 1798)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reimbursement to J Syme</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Maxwell</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total recorded assistance</strong></td>
<td><strong>£100</strong></td>
<td><strong>2s.</strong></td>
<td><strong>10d.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Again, the detail contradicts the assumptions made by previous biographers. Chalmers and subsequent commentators refer to an annual widow’s pension of £10 from the Excise. Looking at the regulations, the widow’s annuity depended on rank within the Excise: as Robert was ‘of the Third Class’ that entitled Jean to £8 at her husband’s death, which was doubled to £16 in 1805.35 Assuming an average expense of approximately £5 10s. per month in the twenty months following Burns’s death implies a total cashflow of about £110 to maintain the family. Allowing for some assistance in kind from friends, the support given to Jean tallies closely to the household’s expenses as assumed above.

Using the 1798–1801 expenses as verified in the Report, it seems fair to assume that the annual Burns family budget at the time of Burns’s death (netting the death of daughter Elizabeth Riddell Burns off against the birth of posthumous son Maxwell Burns) was at least £90. In addition there would be Burns’s spending money, his clothing, the cost of keeping a horse, plus his annuity fund contribution of £1 12s. annually. Assuming a total cost of £20 for these items confirms an estimated annual expense of £110 for the whole family.

Turning to his income, Burns’s basic annual salary as a gauger was £50. Excise officers were able to supplement that through ‘prize-money’ calculated as half the profits from confiscated contraband.

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This averaged around £20 to £25 annually and could be considerably more in good years: Burns made £50 or £60 by these ‘decreets’ in 1790 and probably made more than that at the auction of the smuggler Rosamund in 1792.36 These sums were not guaranteed and in one of Burns's poor years it amounted only to £12 2s. 1d.37 Beyond prize-money, service in a port brought in a further £20 annually from import duties. As Burns's highest income, combining these three sources in the Dumfries port division, was around £95 his annual running costs of £110 clearly exceeded his income even at the peak of his earning capacity.38 Due to declining trade through the port he lost the £20 from import duties from 1794, and by 1796 his increasing inability to work not only inhibited his cash perquisites but meant that up to £15 was stopped out of his salary when he was sick, as he explained to Cunningham:

when an Excise-man is off duty, his salary is reduced to 35£ instead of 50£.—What way, in the name of thrift, shall I maintain myself & keep a horse in Country-quarters—with a wife & five children at home on 35£? I mention this, because I had intended to beg your utmost interest & all friends you can muster to move our Commiss[ione]rs of Excise to grant me the full salary. – I dare say you know them all personally. – If they do not grant it me, I must lay my account with an exit truly en poete, if I die not of disease I must perish with hunger.39

In consequence, over the last thirty weeks of his life he was paid only £23 and this obviously compounded his money problems.40 Robert Burns had been living and was now dying beyond his means. He had clearly exhausted any capital sums in reserve by Whitsunday 1794 when he was unable to meet his rent, so it was from then Burns started to run up structural debts. As he presciently wrote to Mrs Dunlop some months later:

I think that the Poet's old companion, Poverty, is to be my attendant to my grave.---------- You know that my brother, poor fellow! was on the brink of ruin,

37 Chambers Life and Works, iv. 12, who comments on an undated scribble in Burns's handwriting 'on the back of a song' namely: 'I owe Mr Findlater £6 8s 5½d; My share of last year's fine is £12 2s 1d. Owe WM [Williamson?] £14 3s 6d'.
38 Burns, Letters, ii. 135 [L.497]: Robert Burns to Maria Riddell, [Feb.] 1792; i. 464 [L.379]: Robert Burns to The Countess of Glencairn, 23 Dec. 1789; ii. 121 [L.482]: Robert Burns to Robert Ainslie, Nov. 1791
39 Burns, Letters, ii. 385 [L.700]: Robert Burns to Alexander Cunningham, 7 Jul. 1796
40 Scottish Records Office Excise Records, quoted in Mackay, Burns, 616.
when my good fortune threw a little money among my hands which saved him for a while. – Still his ruinous farm threatens to beggar him, & though, a bad debt of ten pounds excepted, he has every shilling I am worth in the world among his hands, I am nearly certain that I have done with it for ever. – This loss, as to my individual self, I could hold it very light; but my little flock would have been the better for a couple of hundred pounds; for their sakes, it wrings my heart.

From a combination of Excise records and his letters it is possible to reconstruct an income and expenditure analysis to quantify the structural imbalance he had created in his family budget. In addition to his perquisites, an officer could expect ‘as much rum & brandy as will easily satisfy an ordinary family’ but this has been assumed to be used in household consumption rather than sold on.\(^{42}\) On the positive side, Burns served as acting supervisor in Mitchell’s absence for twelve weeks from December 1974, earning him an additional £12. On the negative side of the ledger, he was bed-ridden later that year, reducing his salary by around £4 and it is assumed that the perks that year fell short compared to previous years given his restricted working days. A gauger was paid on a six weekly cycle: the records show he received £6 (on 3 March 1796), £3 (14 April), £6 (2 June) and the final £2 (14 July).\(^{43}\) It is assumed that in the first six weeks of 1796 he also earned £4 as he was still in recovery after a bout of illness. This slightly uneven pattern of receipts may be because Mitchell had made several of his periodic advances. His income and expenditure in the Dumfries period is summarised in the following (Table 4).

That estimated cumulative shortfall of £103 equates to the total shown in list of creditors at Burns’s death shown in Table 1 above.

Burns’s peak year of earnings in the Service was in 1790 and it looks as if the Burns family set their household style in accord with that income level but, due to a combination of economic changes in the port and increasing poor health, Burns’s emoluments declined steadily between 1793 and his death. As he described it in his last letter to Gilbert:

*God help my wife & children, if I am taken from their head! – They will be poor indeed. – I have contracted one or two serious debts, partly from my illness these many months & partly from too much thoughtlessness as to expense when I came to town that will cut in too much on the little I leave them in your hands.*\(^{44}\)

The costs of maintaining Burns’s family life in Dumfries which averaged £110 annually consistently exceeded his pay and perquisites from the

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\(^{41}\) Burns, Letters, ii. 310 [L.638]: Robert Burns to Mrs Dunlop, Sep. 1794.

\(^{42}\) Burns, Letters, ii. 131 [L.493]: Robert Burns to Mrs Dunlop, 3 Feb. 1792.


\(^{44}\) Burns, Letters, ii. 387 [L.703]: Robert Burns to Gilbert Burns, 10 Jul. 1796.
Excise. Structural indebtedness was the necessary outcome of that.

Table 4: Burns’s estimated income and expenditure from 1793

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Income £</th>
<th>Expense £</th>
<th>Annual deficit £</th>
<th>Running deficit £</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1793</td>
<td>Base salary £50</td>
<td>Imports £20</td>
<td>Perquisites £25</td>
<td>TOTAL £93 8s. (£110)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(less annuity £1 12s.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Imports £8</td>
<td>Perquisites £25</td>
<td>TOTAL £81 8s. (£110)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(less annuity £1 12s.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1794</td>
<td>Base salary £50</td>
<td>Imports £0</td>
<td>Perquisites £20</td>
<td>Acting Supervisor £12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(less annuity £1 12s.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1795</td>
<td>Base salary £50</td>
<td>Imports £0</td>
<td>Perquisites £20</td>
<td>Acting Supervisor £12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(less annuity £1 12s.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1796:</td>
<td>Base salary £24</td>
<td>Imports £0</td>
<td>Perquisites £20</td>
<td>TOTAL £23 4s. (£64 pro rata) (£40 16s.) (£103)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 weeks to 21 July</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Estimated cumulative shortfall funded by debt (£103)

Source: NRS, CS97/Box 101/15 (Report), 168; Burns, Letters, i, 464 [L.379]; ii, 121 [L.482]; i, 135 [L.497]; ii, 385 [L.700]; NRS, E562/6/89/1.

Burns, Letters, ii, 220 [L.569]: Robert Burns to George Thomson [July 1793].
† Burns, Letters, ii, 320 [L.645]: Robert Burns to Mrs Dunlop, 29 Oct. 1794.

Burns’s Net Worth at his Death

Earning less than is needed to be spent on family life need not be disastrous if valuable assets can be realised (or borrowed against) to bridge the expenditure gap until equilibrium is reached between income and expense. If a person has assets valued greater than the sum of his/her debts (a ‘positive net worth’) then they are merely ‘illiquid’ during that gap which
is a position which can be maintained for some finite period. On the other hand, if the total liabilities exceed the total assets (a ‘negative net worth’) then that person is insolvent and faces bankruptcy. Burns had a positive net worth at his death. However, a banker would describe Burns’s position as ‘paper rich/cash poor’ as his assets exceeded his liabilities with a margin of comfort, but it would take time and cost to turn the largest assets into cash to meet his debts in full. At the time of his death the following balance sheet can be reconstructed from the Report. For the purposes of this reconstruction, it is assumed that Burns’s final pay of £2 was cash in hand and that there was no reserve of cash in the house (which seems fair given the lengths that the dying Burns went to obtain his final salary in person).45

### Table 5: Robert Burns: balance sheet reconstruction as at 21 July 1796

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assets</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>s.</th>
<th>d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gilbert Burns’ debt (£200 initial principal @5% per annum) net of repayments</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Clarke’s Bill (£10 1s. gross)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Books and Furniture (at valuation)</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note (Thomson)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank Note (Burness) (Hamilton)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crombie’s bad debt</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash in hand</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>£ 302</strong></td>
<td><strong>0s. 10¾d.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Liabilities</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>s.</th>
<th>d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tradesmen’s accounts</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note (Gracie)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missive (Stewart)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debt (Mitchell)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rental</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overdue taxes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total liabilities</strong></td>
<td><strong>£ 103</strong></td>
<td><strong>1s. 7d.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Burns’ net worth (total assets less total liabilities)**

£ 198 19s. 3¼d


We know from the Testament Dative sworn by Jean Armour Burns in front of Commissary Goldie on 6 October 1796 that it took about ten weeks before she was able to cash the banknotes sent by Burness and Thomson which had been made out in Burns’s name.46 Other assets included a debt owed by James Clarke, who had been lent money by the poet in March 1793 and had repaid only £2, as recorded in Burns’s last letter to him (26 June 1796) which vainly asked for a further payment ‘by return of post’.47

Clarke’s bill was taken up by Gilbert’s friendly Dumfries writer, William Wallace, shortly after Burns’s death when he advanced cash against it.

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46 NRS, CC5/6/18 (Dumfries Commissary Court), 74–75: Transcript of the Testament Dative and Inventory of Robert Burns, 1796.
towards the expenses of the funeral (including outlays of £2 14s to cover the costs of the lair and for ‘printing funeral letters and advertisements’) with the balance paid to Jean in cash for her immediate needs.48 The Report discloses that Clarke only cleared Wallace’s account in February 1800.

At this first level of analysis, Burns is solvent with a healthy surplus of assets over liabilities. There are issues, however, in terms of liquidity and cashflow which will be discussed below, but the root of the problem was simple: if any significant creditors demanded payment, he would need to turn his assets—principally Gilbert’s debt—into hard cash.

Burns had lent his brother about £180 in 1788 (subsequently formalised by a Note for £200 bearing interest at 5%, dated 18 December 1792, representing £180 principal plus £20 interest accrued). Burns described the transaction to Dr Moore:

I have a younger brother who supports my aged mother, another still younger brother & three sisters in a farm. [...] it cost me about £180 to save them from ruin. – Not that I have lost so much; I only interposed between my brother and his impending fate by the loan of so much.49

As Gilbert’s debt was so important to the Estate, further work is needed to ascertain its realisable value to compute the true worth of Burns’s estate either to his heirs, or in a ‘disaster scenario’ in the hands of his creditors. We can now see why Burns exhibited such distress when faced by a letter seeking repayment of a small part of his over £100 indebtedness. If his health were not to recover the only concrete option to balance his books would be to liquidate Gilbert’s debt. Burns faced the dilemma that saving his own immediate family’s credit was predicated on the likely beggaring of his brother’s extended family. Gilbert married Jean Breckenridge in 1791 and they were to have six sons and five daughters as well as housing ‘Dear Bought Bess’ Burns (until 1796 when she moved to live with her mother), Mrs Burns (until her death in 1820), his sister Agnes (until her marriage in 1804) and his spinster sister Annabella (who outlived him). As Robert wrote to their lawyer cousin:

I have been thinking over & over my brother’s affairs & I fear I must cut him up; but on this I will correspond at another time, particularly as I shall [want] your advice.50

There was no guarantee that ‘cutting Gilbert up’ (that is to say, bankrupting

48 NRS, CS97/Box 101/15 (Report), 169.
49 Burns, Letters, i. 350–52 [L.294]: Robert Burns to Dr Moore, 4 Jan. 1789
50 Burns, Letters, ii. 388 [L705(9)]: Robert Burns to James Burness, 12 Jul. 1796.
him) would secure the well-being of Jean Armour Burns and the children. The value of that debt depended on Gilbert’s own financial position and his farming career was hardly more successful than Robert’s had been.\textsuperscript{51} Gilbert did display a responsible willingness to meet his obligations if time could be afforded him. To that end, he exhibited a statement of his own net worth to John McMurdo in May 1798 which estimated that, absent his household furniture, if he sold up his farm he could raise around £420 but he owed other creditors a total of £326 1s. Adding the £165 balance at that date outstanding on Burns’s bond Gilbert’s net worth was a negative amount of £71 1s.\textsuperscript{52} Table 6 clearly shows that Gilbert was insolvent:

Table 6: \textbf{Gilbert Burns: balance sheet reconstruction as at 30 May 1798}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assets</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>s</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cattle, crop and Farming utensils</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘if sold at a fair price (Gilbert’s Estimate)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Liabilities</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>s</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Debt to Robert Burns’ Estate</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debt to Mrs Agnes Broun Burns (Mother)</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debts and Bills (various)</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Rental (½ year due June)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Rental (current year)</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total assets £420 0 0

Total Liabilities £491 1 0

\textit{Gilbert’s net deficit (Total assets less total liabilities) (£71 1s. 0d.)}


Gilbert reported that his small amount of cash would settle his current household bills so they have been ignored in the analysis. He has been slightly ingenuous, however. In a calculation reminiscent of his father’s, Gilbert includes his mother’s annuity as a creditor, just as William Burnes had his son’s ‘wages’ accounted as liabilities in the Lochlie arbitration. But even if that £72 claim were disallowed, Gilbert was worth nothing.

Gilbert’s position was precarious for if his brother’s creditors pressed for repayment and imposed a foreclosure on Gilbert, Robert may not have been able to repay all his own creditors in full. The best outcome if that happened

\textsuperscript{51} Burns, \textit{Letters}, ii. 310 [L.638]: Robert Burns to Mrs Dunlop, Sep. 1794.

\textsuperscript{52} . . . indulgence is the only probable mode of [Gilbert’s] being able to pay his debt to his Brother’s family, at the same time if you can make any arrangement with him short of bringing his affairs to a Bankruptcy I shall be extremely pleased’, John McMurdo to Dr. Maxwell, 31 May 1798, quoted in McNaught, ‘Documents’, 80.
was that after legal costs each of Gilbert’s creditors would receive their pro rata share of his assets, realising no more than perhaps 75% in a ‘friendly’ breakup. If the purchasers of Gilbert’s goods drove a hard bargain (as often happens in forced sales) and legal bills mounted, they might receive 50% (or less) of their debt. In those scenarios, Burns’s estate’s net worth by May 1798 would have fallen from nearly £200 to £125 or even as little as £82 on a distressed breakup of Gilbert’s farming enterprise. Everything salvaged from Gilbert would effectively go straight to Robert’s creditors to settle his own £103 in debts, leaving both sides of the family destitute.

Commentators have been unkind to Robert’s brother. Mackay, for example, claims that Gilbert paid no interest at all whereas the Report records that interest of 5% per annum was covered up to 1798 and even some small amounts of principal were repaid, albeit mainly in kind. The records show that he was credited with various sums in satisfaction of his interest obligations and to reduce his principal outstanding. These included not only their mother’s annuity but also the costs Gilbert incurred in ‘bed board and washing’ for Burns’s ‘natural’ daughter Elizabeth up to her father’s death, at an agreed rate of £6 10s. annually plus between 13s. and 17s. as actually expended on clothing and schooling. Gilbert also serviced his debt by sending farm produce to his brother’s family and in providing various services. Between July 1793 and September 1797 Gilbert sent a total of 31 stone 5¼ pounds of cheese with an attributed value of £12 2s. 9d. The Factor also recognised the expenses met by Gilbert in accompanying Syme to Liverpool to meet Dr Currie and also Gilbert’s contributions to the funerals of both his legitimate niece Elizabeth and his brother (including for the latter, ‘Grave 2/6, mortcloth 3/-, Bells tolling 5/’).

These payments reduced Gilbert’s obligation to £181 16s. 3½d at the date of Burns’s death but this was still sufficiently large to give the Trustees legitimate concern about its repayment. Given that Gilbert’s debts exceeded his assets, there was a reasonable possibility that Gilbert would face bankruptcy to the prejudice of the Trust, as Thomson reported ‘there is reason to apprehend that the balance [of Gilbert’s bill] cannot be made effectual.’ As an investment Gilbert was a poor credit risk, was too large a proportion of Burns’s estate, and represented an illiquid proposition when the Estate needed liquid cash. The credit fundamentals were so weak that

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53 Mackay, Burns, 622.
54 These first two obligations arose from the Deed of Assignment from Robert to Gilbert, 22 Jul. 1786, Burns, Letters, i. 43–4.
55 Approximately 200 Kilograms. NRS, CS97/Box 101/15 (Report), 50–2.
56 Ibid., 51
no logic could recommend the status quo: it would be sound practice to call in a substantial part of the debt to protect the interests of Burns's widow and children. On the other hand, cousin James Burness had written to Jean in August 1796 (enclosing a further £10) specifically ‘entreat[ing] that, so far as your circumstances will permit, you will use lenity in settling [with her brother-in-law]', a proposition the widow described as being in ‘accord with my own opinion,' sympathising as she did with Gilbert’s extensive family duties.57

Gilbert helped as much as he could to alleviate the Trustees’ concerns by remitting an extra ten Guineas to his sister-in-law in February 1797, reducing his obligation to the £165 level recorded in Table 6. The Trustees then sought to achieve a balanced outcome and demanded that he reduce the debt by a further £40 and in return they would grant him extended time to settle the remainder:

The meeting [of the Trustees] having seriously deliberated upon the situation of the debt due by Gilbert Burns and having taken into consideration a state of his affairs now made up by him; are of opinion that the sum of £40 should be now and least by the first of July next [1798] paid by Mr Gilbert Burns and upon that being complied with by him, they think that upon Mr Burns granting his bill for the remainder time should be allowed him for the discharging thereof, but if the above sum is not so paid the meeting consider it a duty incumbent on them in their situation as Trustees to direct steps to be used for the recovery of such part as may be procured from Mr Burns funds but this they anxiously wish Mr Burns will render unnecessary by exerting himself to procure the foresaid interim payment.58

Gilbert met their demand in bank notes in July 1798, further reducing his debtor balance to £125 10s. 11d. However, his own affairs still failed to prosper and he returned to the Trustees in February 1799 to seek a further loan of £120. They (reluctantly) offered two instalments of £50 if four guarantors of proven wealth would co-sign as sureties, but Gilbert found a less onerous lender in the Bank of Scotland in April 1800 who advanced £200 against the sureties of William Stewart (again helping the family) and two other gentlemen giving the bank £600 in additional and effective security.59 While the principal debt with Burns’s estate was not increased, from this point Gilbert’s ability to service the interest payments declined

57 Chambers, Life and Works, iv. 222.
58 NRS, CS97/Box 101/15 (Report), 6.
as he had to meet his loan obligations to the bank. He could afford to send only cheese and potatoes worth £13 7s. 2d. to his sister-in-law in the period to March 1801 and then a token £3 in farm produce for each of the next eight years before ceasing to pay anything. From 1801, therefore, Gilbert was in technical default under his bill and could have been declared bankrupt at the Trustee’s choosing. Family considerations and the raising of a fund for the poet’s family allowed them to hold their hand but it would take many years for Gilbert fully to repay his obligations to the Estate.60 Ironically, when he agreed the full-and-final settlement of £200 to extinguish the Note to his late brother (which, through accumulated interest stood at £220 7s. 6d. by December 1820) that sum, paid by Cadell & Davies for Gilbert’s editorial contribution to Currie’s Eighth Edition, was sent directly to Robert Burns Junior to rescue him from his own creditors who were clamouring for his incarceration in a London debtor’s prison.61

So the third banking question—‘was Burns insolvent?’—receives the complex answer that while Burns was technically solvent with net assets of around £200, the bulk of his positive net worth was tied up in Gilbert’s underperforming farm business which, if liquidated, would yield less than face value reducing Robert’s Estate by as much as 60%. This course of action would have profound and very negative consequences across the families of both brothers.

**Burns’s Other Financial Options**

Assuming better health, Burns’s core financial strategy appears to have focussed on promotion and patronage within the Excise. His letters show that he was well aware of the rising pay scale he could expect within his career and he appears to have anticipated that there would be sufficient growth in his annual salary to reach eventual financial stability. He was a good officer (notwithstanding the occasional political indiscretion and the rare administrative slip) and had been approved in January 1791 as a candidate for promotion to the post of examiner. As those roles were filled by seniority of candidates on the list (subject to good conduct and

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60 Gilbert’s desire to see full repayment made was recognised. Currie’s first draft included the phrase ‘obligations were found for 400£ advanced by him for friends to whom he was united by the strongest ties of blood & affection: So part of this sum, it is feared, will never be applicable to the support of his family.’ Syme replied ‘Gilbert’s bill was only £200 [...] It is submitted that the idea of not being expected to be realized ought to be omitted as it will be particularly offensive to G Burns, and in fact he has made payment of £40 since his brother’s death besides paying several accounts for the family and furnishing articles & provisions for them:’ (ML, MS 101–198c (Cowie Collection, Currie Correspondence), Envelope 5, No 2 2/4: Currie to Syme, 29 Dec. 1799.)

61 David Purdie, Kirsteen McCue and Gerard Carruthers (eds), Maurice Lindsay’s *The Burns Encyclopaedia* (London, 2013), 69 ['Robert Burns Jr'].
remaining alive), Burns would have been promoted to a vacancy at Chief Office, Leith in January 1797 and his seniority would then have guaranteed him a further uplift to supervisor (in Dunblane in August 1797) on a comfortable salary of £100–200 annually.\(^{62}\) To achieve the ultimate goal of a collectorship required patronage at the board of excise, which he could reasonably expect from Graham of Fintry, which would have seen Burns commissioned in 1798 in comparative wealth with a salary range starting at £200 to over £1,000.\(^{63}\)

This career path may even have been accelerated if Burns’s regular jockeying for position had borne fruit, and it would have seen him comfortably off over time, had he any time left.\(^{64}\) This is sufficient to protect the poet from the charge of utter financial recklessness, but it is important to note that he would not reach a position of income exceeding expenditure until he achieved the collectorship, and then only by assuming that he could hold his family budget at around the £110 level. In the meantime his debts would have continued to rise and he would be increasingly dependent on trade creditors who would probably have been happy to watch their customer rise in the excise ranks, but may have had concerns if the Burns family left Dumfries and so could have demanded settlement of their accounts had the family flitted to Leith, demands which would have been impossible for Burns to meet. Even were he to extend or renew these credits, it could foreseeably take him to at least January 1800 to have an income sufficient to meet his running expenses and have a cash balance in hand.

Burns had options outwith the service. One route would be to reconsider writing for the newspapers, assuming he could be sufficiently uncontroversial in his opinions to retain his Excise role. In 1789, Peter Stuart had invited him to write for The Star (‘for . . . a small salary quite as large as his Excise office emoluments’) while James Perry of The Morning Chronicle had

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\(^{63}\) Burns, *Letters*, ii. 345 [L.660]: Robert Burns to [Patrick] Heron, Mar. 1795: ‘I am on the supervisors’ list, and as we come on there by precedency, in two or three years I shall be at the head of that list, and be appointed, of course. [...] The moment I am appointed supervisor, in the common routine, I may be nominated on the collector’s list; and this is always a business purely of political patronage. A collectorship varies much, from better than two hundred a year to near a thousand. They also come forward by precedency on the list; and have besides a handsome income, a life of compleat leisure. A life of literary leisure, with a decent competency, is the summit of my wishes.’ This projected career progression is taken from John Sinton, *Burns, Excise Officer and Poet, a Vindication: (Carlisle, 1895).*

similarly offered one Guinea a week in 1794. Another possibility would be to seek payment in respect of his creative input to George Thomson’s Select Collection of Scottish Airs. Burns felt strongly that his contribution to this project was a duty which he had to perform pro bono as he had partnered with James Johnson for his Scots Musical Museum, so at the start of their collaboration Burns had refused payment from Thomson in the bluntest of terms. Typically, Thomson did not go out of his way to persuade his collaborator to change his mind over payment, although Burns did accept some non-monetary gifts from him, but the dispatch of £5 in cash to the poet was the occasion of harsh words between them. However, the necessity of providing for his family might even overcome his former perhaps over-scrupulous position. As the composer Pleyel had netted over £130 from Thomson in 1793, this could once have been an avenue to balance Robert’s books; however, by then Thomson’s own credit was strained (he had to borrow the £5 note he sent to the dying Burns) so this avenue may no longer have been fruitful.

Similarly, a new or expanded edition of his Works would be financially positive if an agreement could be reached with William Creech, the publisher and copyright holder of the two Edinburgh editions. Creech was a shrewd businessman and was a slow payer of royalties, but the one hundred Guineas he paid for the copyright of the First Edinburgh Edition cannot truly be considered the unfair bargain of which many commentators accuse him: while not the thousands commanded by Robertson or Hume, this was as much as Jane Austen received for Pride and Prejudice (1813). Burns had quixotically supplied new material for the second Edinburgh edition gratis however a new edition was a real possibility if terms could be agreed and poems provided.

On a more nebulous level there was possible political assistance: Sir Walter Scott recorded in his Journals that Henry Addington (who admired Burns’s poetry and nearly met him in 1788) had sought ways to create an element of governmental patronage for Burns, notwithstanding the accusations of Jacobite or Jacobin thought. At first this seems less likely,

68 Burns, *Letters*, ii. 389 [L.706]: Robert Burns to George Thomson, 12 Jul. 1796
69 Mackay, *Burns*, 294.
70 Burns, *Letters*, ii. 139–40 [L.502]: Robert Burns to Mr Creech 16 April 1792.
but it was Addington who would go on to provide the small patronage step for Robert Junior to join the Stamp Office in London.

All of these strategies, however, were dependent on Burns remaining alive and being able to work and write. His illness and early death closed these avenues leaving his wife and children (both legitimate and illegitimate) in acute financial distress which was only ameliorated by public generosity. The combined efforts of the Trustees campaigning across Scotland, Sir James Shaw and Peter Laurie in London and the share of profits from Cadell & Davies in respect of Currie’s edition generated a capital sum of £3,070, which with Jean’s pension from the excise yielded an annual income of around £117, sufficient to meet the family’s expenses, as Currie described it: ‘thus the widow and children were rescued from immediate distress, and the most melancholy of the forebodings of Burns happily disappointed.’

Burns, while overspending, was aware that he had several options to re-establish financial stability for his family. Most dramatically, he (or subsequent to his death, his executrix or his children’s factor) could foreclose on Gilbert with the caveat that that course of action might just raise enough cash to eliminate the poet’s quite extensive debts. If that option were discounted, then he would need to find additional sources of income as well as decreasing the family’s living expenses, both of which were hard tasks and certainly impossible to achieve were he to remain seriously ill or die. The realisation that he had run out of time to implement other strategies must have been the concern weighing on his mind as he wrote those anguished letters in the closing days of his life. The Report clearly shows that Burns had no financial security. At the time of his death both his family and his brother’s faced financial ruin. Burns was no stranger to financial pressure, he described himself in the opening line of his First Commonplace Book in 1783 as ‘Robt Burness: a man who had little art in making money and still less in keeping it.’ Poignantly, in the top right-hand corner of the manuscript of Lines written on a Bank-note is a jotted calculation adding up to 25 shillings, presumably the debts that 21 shilling note needed to be stretched to cover. Burns spent his life, and death, consistently on the wrong side of the Micawber equation and as can be seen from the factual data contained in the Report, even to his dying day, money was Burns’s ‘woe and grief.’ This new analysis of the data

contained in the Report clearly shows that, with the capital he had made from his books gone, or sunk into Gilbert’s farm, Burns relied solely on his pay from the Excise to maintain his family, but in the year he earned the most, his expenditure was 18% higher than his income. His consistent overspending was enabled by creating structural debt from tradesmen, his kindly landlord and friends with little clear plan of how to repay those people. His approach to financial life was ultimately a reckless hope that something would turn up.

As Burns himself abjured us, ‘But Facts are cheels that winna ding, / An’ downa be disputed’ and certainly the historical facts of Burns’s weak finances and absence of financial foresight are now plain.  


Burns’ lines written on the back of the One Guinea Note Images courtesy of The Robert Burns Birthplace Museum.
Face of one Guinea Note
Lay the proud usurpers low

Robert Burns

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BLENDED SCOTCH WHISKY ALSO AVAILABLE.
Fragments that Remain: “A Verse by Burns,”
the Tarbolton Bachelors’ Club, and David Sillar’s Manuscript Rules
Patrick Scott

One of the most tantalizing problems for Burns research is the number of Burns-related manuscripts that were cut up so that nineteenth-century Burns collectors could own something, however small or fragmentary, in the poet’s hand or connected with him. It was much less likely to happen to the manuscripts of poems or songs, but it happened to many of the Thornhill excise documents, for instance, and to the expanded manuscript glossary Burns prepared for the Edinburgh edition. Fragments like these can be unglamorous, unlikely to leave much trace in the auction or sales records, and difficult to catalogue, and they can be even more effectively lost in large collections than in small ones. The National Distributed Burns Collection (now Burns Scotland), the related Westwood Definitive Companion, the digital images on the Birthplace website, the Burns items on Future Museum, and elsewhere, all represent important attempts to track such fragmentary material, but it remains elusive.

Sometimes one will find earlier references to a manuscript, only to have the trail run cold, and the successive strata of published information will be too lightly referenced to help track down the original source for verification, or even to make clear exactly what is being looked for, a complete manuscript or a fragment. One niggling example is the whereabouts of the manuscript rules for the Tarbolton Bachelors’ Club, which have twice been cited by Burns’s modern biographers, but which could not be located when the Oxford editors wanted to check the text. Unnervingly, the manuscripts section of the great Glasgow Memorial Exhibition had included an entry for “Rules and Regulations of the ‘Batchelors’ Club,’ Tarbolton, of which Burns was a member,” which were then owned by a Mr. Archibald Munro.1 This may not however have been the original manuscript, because a few years before, the Scottish newspapers had reported the discovery of the manuscript records for a slightly later refounding of the Club, in

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1 Memorial Catalogue of the Burns Exhibition held in the Galleries of the Royal Glasgow Institute of the Fine Arts … from 15th July to 31st October, 1896 (Glasgow: William Hodge and T. & R. Annan, 1898), p. 182, item 1258. Mr. Munro, of 18, Minto Street, Edinburgh, also loaned, inter alia, a 1788 Burns letter to Robert Ainslie, manuscript poem by Clarinda, a gold brooch formerly belonging to Jean Armour, and a piece of the thorn tree from Montgomerie Castle: Memorial Catalogue, pp. 499, 155, 173, 105, and 95. A longtime Burnsian, Munro had written to the Scotsman in December 1882, retailing an elderly woman’s memories of meeting Burns in 1792, though her account was subsequently shown to be improbable (Scotsman, December 26, 1882; Dundee Evening Telegraph, Tuesday, January 9, 1883, p. 2).
1786, involving Burns’s friend David Sillar, a member since 1781. The first modern mention of the manuscript rules of 1780-1781 seems to be in the biography by the late James Mackay:

At the inaugural meeting the rules of the Club were drawn up. A copy exists to this day in Sillar’s holograph, but without doubt Robert was the person chiefly responsible for drafting the rules, reproduced in full by Currie and much-quoted in part by all subsequent biographers.³

Mackay’s footnote, however, refers the researcher only to the Currie text, not to a current location for the Sillar holograph. There is a similar reference in Robert Crawford’s The Bard, saying that that the rules “surviv[e] in a version handwritten by David Sillar,” while “reading very much as if Burns … was their principal if not sole author.”⁴ When the Glasgow team were editing the Tarbolton rules for the first volume of the Oxford Edition of Robert Burns, they hunted for Sillar’s handwritten version but reported that “we have not been able to locate” it.⁵

However, fragments of such a manuscript do indeed survive, if not a complete manuscript. Their existence, and location, were reported in 1935, in a brief note in the Burns Chronicle, headed misleadingly “A Verse by Burns.” The note, presumably by the editor J. C. Ewing, reads, in full:

A VERSE BY BURNS

Two small portions of the “preamble” and rules and regulations of the Tarbolton Bachelors’ Club (instituted 1780), in the holograph of David Sillar, are preserved in the Alloway Burns Cottage Museum. On the reverse of one of the fragments are the following four lines in Burns’s hand:

The greatness that would make us grave

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² “An Interesting ‘Find’ in Burnsiana—Minute Book of a Mauchline Debating Club,” Glasgow Herald, Saturday June 18, 1892, p. 6; Dundee Evening Telegraph, same date, p. 2; Edinburgh Evening News, same date, p. 2; Aberdeen Journal, Wednesday, June 22, 1892, p. 6.
³ James Mackay, RB: A Biography of Robert Burns (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1992, repr. 1993), p. 82. Earlier biographers had been more cautious: cf., e.g., about Rule 10, “the proper person for this society is a cheerful, honest-hearted lad,” Snyder writes “There is no evidence that Burns himself wrote this paragraph, but it is clear he approved it; and, indeed, it is hard to believe that any member of the group save Burns could have coined the phrases”: Franklyn Bliss Snyder, The Life of Robert Burns (New York: Macmillan, 1932), p. 71.
Is but an empty thing.
What more than mirth could mortals have;
The cheerful man’s a king.

Could Ewing’s note, rather than a missing full-length manuscript, be what lies behind Mackay’s comment? The echo of the word “holograph” certainly suggests that possibility, despite Mackay’s lack of citation.

The manuscript fragments reported in 1935 are still at the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum, as Accession 3.6698. I am indebted to David Hopes for seeking them out when I inquired and sending me photographs. The two passages from the Tarbolton Bachelors’ Club rules are on two sides of the same slip of paper.

Rule 3, Tarbolton Bachelors’ Club,
Robert Burns Birthplace Museum, National Trust for Scotland.

One side, of five lines, a passage from Rule 3, is cut close into the wording at the top and right hand edges, leading to a partial loss of text:

But if there be fewer members…
when all the members of the least side have spoken acc…
to their places, any of them as they please among them…
may reply to the remaining members of the opposite…
when both sides have spoken the President shall give his..

The other side, of just four lines, a passage from Rule 7, has its wording intact and reads:

7. No member on any pretence whatever shall mention any of the club’s affairs to any other person but a brother member under the pain of being excluded; & particularly, if any member shall reveal any of the speeches, or affairs

The text for these passages, if not always the punctuation, conforms

7 Cf. Currie I: 368.
exactly to that printed by Currie, and so also to the text in the new Oxford edition, and some large ink slashes across the second passage seem to be similar to those sometimes found on other manuscripts used by Currie in preparing his edition.

But the fragments of the Tarbolton rules are preserved with a group of other manuscript fragments. As now mounted, the rules come at the middle of the grouping, with other fragments above and below. Two fragments at the foot of the page are of limited interest: one with signatures for Isabella Begg, Jean Armour, and Jean Burns, and with the phrase “to fear in regard” on the verso; the other a very small scrap from a business document of “account betwint William Burns and William Galbraith 1776,” with three partial lines on the verso in which I could decode only the words “halfe-penny.”

Page of mounted fragments, including a stanza by Isaac Bickerstaff in Burns’s hand, and Rule 7, Tarbolton Bachelors’ Club, Robert Burns Birthplace Museum, National Trust for Scotland.

At the top of the page is a single piece of paper, with verses on both sides. One side (shown above) has the verse printed by Ewing in 1935 as being by Burns, or at least as being in his hand. The verse’s egalitarian
message and recommendation of cheerfulness might seem appropriate both to the Tarbolton club and to Burns’s own sense of sociability, but these lines are not by Burns, not even on the embroidered outer fringes of the Burns apocrypha: they come from Isaac Bickerstaffe’s popular and frequently-reprinted play *Love in a Village* (1762).

On the other side of the top fragment, however, are two verses, in a different and more formal hand. The second stanza is familiar, because it was printed by Currie as an epigraph for the history of the Club. The first stanza is not familiar, though, because Currie did not include it, perhaps because the fragment was clipped close on the left hand edge making the beginning of the lines unclear: it is easy enough to fill in the missing words.

Let none e’er join us who refuse,
[To] aid the lad who hods the plow;
[To pl]ease a friend or wale a wife,
[These] are the labour of his life.

Of birth or blood we do not boast,
nor gentry does our club afford;
But Plowmen and Mechanics we
in nature’s simple dress accord.⁸

The second, better-known stanza, has recently been claimed for Burns

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⁸ The reading, here, “accord,” is based on a photograph, not examination of the fragment itself; Currie, and all citations since, print “record.” Both rhyme words seem a bit desperate, but “accord” fits the theme.
himself, but Currie’s comment is vague both about its authorship, and the near-contemporary evidence of Josiah Walker attributes it instead to David Sillar. The very early connection of the second verse with the Tarbolton Bachelors’ Club, from its use in Currie, make it at least plausible that the top fragment was also once part of the dismembered club history and regulations represented in the middle fragment. If so, then the stanza in Burns’s hand from Bickerstaffe on the verso of the top fragment, the two stanzas in a different hand on the recto attributed to Sillar, and the regulations themselves, were all written out for and cut out from the same document, presumably when, a Currie attests, Sillar copied out the original rules. The three together certainly confirm the sense of the club’s ethos inferred from other sources.

It is hard sometimes to forgive the Victorian autograph hunters and relic-collectors whose eagerness once encouraged the naïve owners of original manuscript material to cut it up into small collectible shreds. But cut it up they did, though happily many of the dispersed shreds have survived, more treasured, perhaps, by their individual owners than they might be in a large institution. I would urge any Burnsians who themselves own such fragments to share scans or other copies with the Birthplace, the Center for Robert Burns Studies at Glasgow, or another major Burns project or collection, in case they can provide the crucial missing piece for a larger picture.

9 Walker’s comment reads: “a few verses are prefixed, which are not, as Dr. Currie presumes, from the pen of Burns. They were contributed by Mr. David Sillars <sic>.” See [Josiah Walker], in Poems by Robert Burns, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: printed for the trustees of the late James Morison, by John Moir, 1811), I: xlv-xlvi, cited also in Robert W. Chambers, revised William Wallace, Life and Works of Robert Burns, 4 vols. (Edinburgh: Chambers, 1896), I: 66, footnote. For recent attribution of the second stanza to Burns, see, e.g., Andrew Noble and Patrick S. Hogg, eds., The Canongate Burns, revd. ed. (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2003), p. 644: “Found in the hand of Burns, these lines are almost certainly his;” or, more cautiously, Nigel Leask, Robert Burns and Pastoral Poetry (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 12; and Leask, ed., Commonplace Books, p. 310, n. 28.
The Burns Apocrypha:  
“Fragment on Maria,” James Hurdis, and Scott Douglas as Editor  
Davidson Cook  
Introduction by Patrick Scott

Introductory Note

In the Burns Chronicle for 2016, I concluded an article about the Burns scholar Davidson Cook (1874-1941) and A. J. Law’s “lost” collection of Burns manuscripts by asking: “what happened to Cook’s papers, photographs, and transcripts, after his death in 1941?,” commenting that: “Following his retirement in 1939, Cook had moved back from Barnsley to the Glasgow area. …. My instinct is that Cook himself would have arranged for the preservation of his Burns materials in Scotland, rather than in Yorkshire.”

I should have known. A brief reference in the introduction to the 1962 reprint of Dick’s Songs of Robert Burns mentions “five volumes of papers” at the Mitchell Library, and there are indeed entries under Cook for “Jottings and draft notes … MS and typescript” in the 1959 and 1996 Mitchell catalogues. During a visit to Glasgow in April, the Chronicle editor Bill Dawson and I were able to look at a substantial box of unpublished Cook material that included his research notes on Burns in early newspapers, drafts and a typed Indicator or index for an unpublished four-volume “bibliographical edition,” and, most intriguingly, an unpublished book manuscript from 1921 titled The Burns Apocrypha: A Collection of Spurious Poems Erroneously Ascribed to Robert Burns (Mitchell MS 54/5 [557209]). This last gives the text for each of the disputed items, as given by the first major Burns edition to include it, and then follows with a characteristically-astringent essay or “Relegation Note” on why Cook thinks it is not by Burns.

Much of the unpublished book has of course been superseded by subsequent research, but with the library’s permission, we are printing

here just one of Cook’s “relegation” notes (ff. 27-30), as a sample of his tenacious research methods, working at home in his spare time from his job with the Barnsley British Cooperative Society, long before the internet or online catalogues and far from any major Burns library. We are indebted to Susan Taylor of the Mitchell, both for her assistance during the April visit and for checking and correcting my transcript from Cook’s handwriting.

Patrick Scott

BURNS APOCRYPHA
FRAGMENT ON MARIA

(Scott Douglas, 1877-79, iii, 82)

How gracefully Maria leads the dance!
She’s life itself: I never saw a foot
So nimble and so elegant. It speaks,
And the sweet whispering Poetry it makes
Shames the musician.

Adriano, or, The first of June.

RELEGATION NOTE:
Scott Douglas led me on a dance with this poetical fragment. Following the lines he prints this explanation:

“[This elegant little fragment appears, in the poet’s holograph, on the back of a MS. Copy of the “Lament of Mary Queen of Scots” that had apparently been presented by the author to a lately acquired friend, Mrs Maria Riddell of Woodley Park, near Dumfries, wife of Mr Walter Riddell, a younger brother of Captain Riddell of Glenriddell. In April 1877, we copied the lines and forwarded them to the Editor of Notes and Queries, London, with a view to obtain information from correspondents about their authorship. The result was that on 28th April the reply of a reader announced that the fragment had been copied by Burns from a poem by James Hurdis, called “The Village Curate,” published in 1789. On 2d Feb. 1790 Burns ordered a copy from Peter Hill.]”

That seems conclusive enough, and probably this Note accounted for Henley & Henderson omitting the lines from their *Centenary Edition* 1896-97. If so, they did the right thing for a wrong reason. There is more confusion and error in, and arising out of this Note, than in any other of Scott Douglas's annotations. After much searching I secured a copy of “the Village Curate,” and found that it was dated, not 1789, but 1788. A page by page search proved that, contrary to the information given by S[cott] D[ouglas] the *Maria* lines are not in “The Village Curate.” There is a Maria in the poem, but the nearest and somewhat parallel lines are

”… what time she trips  
With foot inaudible the sprightly round  
Of fairy dance, outshining ev’ry star  
And planet of the night …”

Scott Douglas says he copied the lines and sent them to the Editor of *Notes and Queries*, “In April 1877,” but his query was printed in the No dated *March* 10, 1877. The discrepancy is unimportant, but it accentuates the carelessness with which he treated the results of his research work in connection with this fragment. His Query reads: “Are the annexed lines a quotation from one of our dramatic authors. They form the concluding portion of a communication sent by Burns, 1791, to his friend Maria Riddel,

“How gracefully, etc.  
“Scoto Gladus”

The answer, given by W.R. Morfill in N & Q of April 28, 1877, p. 339, is as follows:

“SEE POEMS BY JAMES HURDIS, 1810, P. 214”

Notwithstanding Scott Douglas plainly tells us that “a reader announced that the fragment had been copied by Burns from ‘The Village Curate,’”

If there was an edition of Hurdis's *Poems* in 1810, it is not noted in Lowndes.\(^4\) Probably the date is an error.\(^5\) I have a copy of Poems by Rev. James Hurdis, D.D., 3 volumes, Oxford, 1808. In volume one, p. 214, are the lines found in Burns's handwriting. They occur in a piece which Burns correctly printed, but without comment, to wit, ‘Adriano, or, The First of June’. The only difference is, that Scott Douglas errs in printing “So nimble and so *eloquent*.” For


\(^5\) WorldCat shows that for once Cook’s scepticism was unjustified: Hurdis's *The Village Curate and Other Poems; including some pieces now first published* (London: printed by Charles Whittingham, 1810) was in two volumes, and is quite distinct from the 3 volume 1808 edition.
a foot which “speaks” the latter is of course the best word. Burns quoted correctly, and so did Scott Douglas in his ‘Query,’ which makes the mistake in his great Works all the more incomprehensible. Obviously Burns could not quote from the 1808 edition of Hurdis’s Poems, though he has been credited with writing a verse on a pane in Chester (a place he was never in) in 1798—two years after he was dead. “Adriano; or The First of June, by the Author of The Village Curate,” was published in 1790. There is a copy in the British Museum, 105 pp. The lines quoted by Burns are on p. 94. Another edition dated 1792 is in the Museum Library, but as he wrote the “Lament of Mary Queen of Scots” in 1791 it seems certain that the “Adriano” handled by Burns was the first edition.

We have not yet exhausted the chapter of blunders arising out of Scott Douglas’s Note. Turning to his volume ii, p. 329, we find he closes his Note on the “Lament” thus: Besides a beautiful fac-simile of this ballad which has been published, we have inspected an original manuscript in the British Museum.” The MS of the Lament of Mary Queen of Scots, with the lines on Maria which “follows immediately after this beautiful ballad” is in the Kilmarnock Monument Collection (see Kilmarnock Burns MSS., 1889, p. 115).

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Burns’ Commonplacebook transcription of the lines from “Adriano” by Rev. James Hurdis
A Burns Puzzle Solved:  
Davidson Cook and the “English” Original for  
“It is na, Jean, thy bonie face”  
Patrick Scott

One of the longstanding puzzles for Burns editors has been the original on which he based the song “It is na, Jean, thy bonie face,” first published unsigned in the Scots Musical Museum in 1792.¹ Though the song has been treated as Burns’s own since at least 1803, Burns himself never claimed authorship, writing that “These were originally English verses; I gave them their Scots dress.”²

Over the past two centuries, however, efforts to find the “English verses” have proved fruitless. Many editors (Cunningham, Stenhouse, Waddell, Scott Douglas, Chambers-Wallace, Low) simply quote Burns’s comment, without looking further. Some try to identify the source, but end up with partial parallels to specific lines or phrases. Henley and Henderson state “Those ‘English verses’ are not to be found;” J. C. Dick concludes that “nothing of another similar song has been discovered;” Kinsley himself, who provides a plethora of earlier parallels to particular lines or stanzas, from Carew, Whitehead, and Herrick, nonetheless begins his commentary with the bald statement that “I have not discovered a model.”³ The Canongate editors seem to suspect that there never was an original, writing of it as “allegedly based on an old English song, which editorially still remains unlocated.”⁴ And, of course, a quick computer search for the most distinctive phrase is not going to work if Burns had changed the language of his source.

One earlier solution to this puzzle seems to have gone unnoticed. Nearly a hundred years ago, in 1918, Davidson Cook published a short article with the simple but uninformative title “The Young Poet.”⁵ The young poet was John Armstrong—not the better-known physician-poet, Dr. John Armstrong (1709-1779), author of The Art of Preserving

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Health, but a quite different, later John Armstrong (1771-1797), author of Juvenile Poems (1789), published when he was still a student at Edinburgh University. Juvenile Poems is genuinely rare. I could locate only four copies of the original in major libraries (in the British Library, National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh University Library, and the Mitchell), and there is a digital facsimile in Eighteenth-Century Collections Online (ECCO). But Armstrong’s book had been published by Burns’s friend, the Edinburgh bookseller, Peter Hill, and Hill sent Burns a copy. Burns noted in a letter to Hill (February 2, 1790) that the volume included a tribute to Burns:

“Mr Armstrong, the young Poet who does me the honour to mention me so kindly in his Works, please give him my best thanks for the copy of his book. — I shall write him, my first leisure hour. —I like his Poetry much, ….”

It was because he had wanted to read Armstrong’s tribute to Burns that Davidson Cook tried to get hold of Juvenile Poems. Amazingly, in the middle of the First World War, a book dealer hunted a copy down for him. In it Cook found, not one, but two, poems mentioning Burns. Then he recognized that a third poem seemed familiar:

No, Delia, ‘tis not thy face,
    Nor form that I admire,
Although thy beauty and thy grace
    Might well awake desire.

Something in ev’ry part of thee
    To praise, to love, I find,
But dear as is thy form to me,
    Still dearer is thy mind.

No selfish passion moves my breast,
    No higher wish I know,
Than, if I cannot make thee blest,
    At least to see thee so,

If heav’n but happiness shall give
    To thee,—content am I;
And as with thee I’d wish to live,
    For thee I’d bear to die.”

As Cook immediately realized, to his “unbounded delight,” he had

7 John Armstrong, Juvenile Poems: with Remarks on Poetry, and a Dissertation on the Best Method of Punishing and Preventing Crimes (Edinburgh: Peter Hill, 1789), 95.
found the elusive original of Burns’s song:

It is na, Jean, thy bonie face,
Nor shape that I admire,
Altho’ thy beauty and thy grace
Might weel awauck desire.

Something in ilka part o’ thee
To praise, to love, I find,
But dear as is thy form to me,
Still dearer is thy mind.

Nae mair ungen’rous wish I hae,
Nor stronger in my breast,
Than, if I canna mak thee sae,
At least to see thee blest.

Content am I, if Heaven shall give
But happiness to thee:
And as wi’ thee I’d wish to live,
For thee I’d bear to die.

The “English verses” were not an “old English song,” or a song by an English writer, but verses written in English, by a Scotsman. In Cook’s summation, “even after Burns put the ‘kilts’ on the English verses, there was so much of ‘Armstrong’ left, and so little of little of ‘Burns’ grafted into the lyric, that we must … relegate the piece to the ‘slightly altered’ department of the Burns Apocrypha” (Cook, p. 156). Yet, if the second stanza is hardly changed at all, the third is significantly revised and improved, and the fourth is altered to get rid of an awkward inversion and to ensure a final rhyme in Scots. In overall tone, Burns reworked Armstrong’s conventional English pastoral (“No, Delia, ‘tis not thy face”) into direct spoken Scots (“It is na, Jean, thy bonie face”). Indeed, some commentators have found the reworked version so natural and sincere that they have read it as an original love poem to Jean Armour written before their marriage, and so have backdated its composition to 1787-88 or even earlier. While it remains reasonable to take the Burns version as addressed to Jean, the publication date and nature of the Armstrong poem necessitates redating Burns’s version to 1790 or even 1791 and so muting the more extreme biographical interpretations.

More recent Burns scholars are hardly to be blamed for not taking note of Cook’s chance discovery. Nothing in his article title signals that it is about Burns, let alone about “It is na, Jean, thy bonie face.” A Canadian
Burnsian, W. MacDonald Mackay, soon summarized Cook’s article for a Scottish-American monthly, but with the equally-uninformative heading “An Interesting Burns Discovery.” Towards the end of the year, the venerable Duncan M’Naught also summarized the article, in the Burns Chronicle (1st series, 28, 1919, pp. 128-129), with a clear enough heading on the summary, but with the volume contents only showing a catch-all title, “Notes and Queries.” Fifteen years later, Cook mentioned his discovery in a brief aside, with no quotation or page reference from Armstrong, and no citation of the 1918 article, on the second-to-last page of his essay about Burns’s copy of James Oswald’s Caledonian Pocket Companion. That was where, by chance, I noticed it, earlier this year; ECCO gave me a digital version of the Armstrong original; a Google search for Armstrong gave me the Mackay article in the Caledonian; and that led me to Cook’s 1918 article in the still-undigitized London Bookman. But until you know there is an answer out there, you are unlikely to frame a search that finds these references.

It is a salutary tale, but not a unique one. One of the biggest difficulties, even for long-time Burnsians or experienced Burns researchers, is the sheer scale of what has been published since Burns first became famous. Much of it is necessarily derivative and repetitive, but in each generation someone uncovers some new information or some salient fact. There has never been a comprehensive bibliography of Burns scholarship. Even if Cook’s title had been more index-friendly, or had been published in a standard academic journal, in 1918 the academic reference indexes that we now take for granted simply didn’t exist. The ongoing digitization of the Burns Chronicle will help a great deal, but neither the Bookman nor the Scots Magazine has yet been digitized. Most of us rely on a few standard editions to help us keep track and organize such titbits of information. How easily a discovery such as Davidson Cook’s can slip through the research net.


“A parcel of mash’d old rags“:
some provisional remarks on the Burns Paper Database.¹
Ronnie Young

Considering their widespread publication and global reach, the works of Robert Burns are perhaps worth far more than the paper they were originally written on, even taking into account the substantial cash value of a genuine manuscript by the poet. Yet paper - to us a relatively disposable medium - was for Burns a crucial part of a complex creative process and a central part of his life as poet, farmer and exciseman. The Burns Paper Database is a project to capture some of that life and, for the first time, to record the various details about the paper on which Burns wrote. Using recent technology - the software database and the digital image – to compare and assess Burns’s manuscripts, we can develop an aid to dating and authenticating Burns’s manuscripts and even reveal clues about the writing of specific works.

As a poet who was characteristically self-aware about the process of writing, Burns also frequently showed awareness of the medium on which he wrote. On 18 July 1788, Robert Burns replied from Mauchline to the bookseller Peter Hill (1754-1837), excusing his failure to maintain a regular correspondence with his friend and business representative in Edinburgh:

“You injured me, my dear Sir, in your construction of the cause of my Silence.—From Ellisland in Nithsdale to Mauchline in Kyle, is forty & five miles; there, a house a building, & farm inclosures & improvements to tend; here, A new—not so much indeed a new as a young wife—Good God, Sir, could my dearest BROTHER expect a regular correspondence from me!—I who am busied with the sacred Pen of Nature, in the mystic Volume of Creation, can I dishonor my hand with a dirty goose feather, on a parcel of mash’d old rags?”²

Here, Burns sets up a contrast between the transcendent process of creation (or, as the double entendre of ‘Pen’ and ‘Volume’ suggest, procreation) and the grubby business of writing letters to friends using a dirty quill on what he calls a ‘parcel of mash’d old rags’, or what we might

¹ This work is part of the AHRC project “Editing Robert Burns for the 21st Century” based at the University of Glasgow that underpins the first phase of the Oxford University Press Edition of the Complete Works of Robert Burns. The article is based on a presentation given at Greenock West Church on the 16 June 2016. My thanks to Burns Scotland and Greenock Burns Club for organising the symposium, to Bill Dawson and Gerry Carruthers, and to Patrick Scott for his input. Credit also goes to Ralph McLean and the National Library of Scotland for assistance with images and permissions.

refer to quite simply as ‘paper’. As fanciful as Burns’s image is, it shows a degree of insight into the very real process of making something as apparently simple as paper. As a publishing poet, Burns ‘networked’ with individuals engaged in closely related industries, and his circles of acquaintance included papermakers as well as editors, booksellers, printers and so on. We know that Hill, for example, later visited the poet in Dumfries, bringing with him Cameron the papermaker and Ramsay, printer of the Edinburgh Evening Courant, both of whom Burns referred to as ‘my trusty & well-beloved veterans in intimacy’. But even prior to this Dumfries visit, Burns was presenting Hill with an insightful poetic image regarding paper production and the scraps of old textiles that were ‘mash’d’ to make paper, which in the late eighteenth century was still made by hand.

‘Old’ or not, rags were in great demand by eighteenth-century papermakers as the raw material for their product, with finer examples of linen, muslin or cambric rags being particularly valuable for making ‘white paper’ suitable for writing and for printing. While the modern reader may associate paper with plant fibres such as wood pulp, eighteenth-century paper was still produced from textile remnants. Not only the papermaking industry but a whole set of cultural activities also, from commerce to printing, depended on the recycling of ‘mash’d old rags’, as the following verse from the period suggests:

Rags make paper,
Paper makes money,
Money makes banks,
Banks make loans,
Loans make beggars,
Beggars make rags.4

It was ultimately such recycled rags on which Burns, the arch ‘recycler’ of Scots verse and song, depended to preserve his moments of inspiration.

To make paper, the papermaker would dip a wooden-framed mould lined with wire into a solution made from these rags. The mould essentially worked like a sieve, allowing excess water to drain away, leaving a film of the rags on the wires, which the papermaker would turn out onto a woollen felt to form a sheet of paper. This process would repeat to form multiple sheets,


which would then be dried, treated with size and pressed to form reams.\textsuperscript{5} It is the mould that becomes key to identifying the paper on which Burns wrote. Were you to hold Burns’s manuscripts to the light, you should see the tell-tale signs of the ‘laid’ paper on which he usually wrote: a pattern of vertical ‘chain’ lines approximately an inch apart and, running perpendicular to this closer horizontal ‘laid’ lines, all of which are simply the impression of the wires of the mould on which the paper was produced. One might, depending on whether the original sheet of paper has been subdivided by either Burns or later collectors (as often appears to be the case), also see a watermark or a countermark or both: elaborate designs made with wire stitched onto the mould. For the purposes of identifying the paper on which Burns wrote – and indeed in helping to distinguish the genuine manuscript from the spurious – such impressions as remain on the paper give clues about the paper and the papermaker.\textsuperscript{6}

The following example of Burns’s ‘Epistle to Mr Tytler of Woodhouselee’,\textsuperscript{7} provides a particularly fine example of the tell-tale signs of eighteenth-century ‘laid’ paper and thus what we might expect one of Burns’s manuscripts to look like (fig 1 below). We see clearly the vertical ‘chain’ lines and the more densely packed horizontal ‘laid’ lines, plus a characteristic darkening of the horizontal laid lines where they meet the chain lines on the mould. In this particular example, a single sheet of paper folded in half by Burns to make multiple pages across which to write his letter, we are also fortunate to have the watermark and countermark. On the right, underneath the writing, one can just make out the figure of Britannia, a common British watermark; on the left, the countermark shows that this paper was manufactured by R. Williams. We can also see a number of repairs to this manuscript in the darker areas where tape has been applied across tears and the seams of folds:


\textsuperscript{6} Note that the same laid paper was used for printing books; however, a survey of the paper used in the early editions of Burns’s published poetry is not part of the current project.

\textsuperscript{7} ‘Epistle to Mr Tytler of Woodhouselee,’ on long-term deposit to the National Library of Scotland, Acc 10610. With thanks to the manuscript’s owners for their kind permission to include this image.
Fig. 1. ‘Epistle to Mr Tytler of Woodhouselee’, National Library of Scotland, Acc 10610.

Fig. 2. Britannia watermark from Epistle
While writing paper was not the only medium used by Burns (who even etched on glass with a diamond-tipped stylus), it was a crucial part of the creative process which lead to the wider dissemination of his work through print. At a basic level, paper provided not only an effective medium on which Burns could write his thoughts but an easy means of transporting his work. Sending a letter or a verse was a simple matter of folding the paper into an envelope, addressing it, and sealing it with red wax stamped with one of the poet’s seals, as the ‘letterlocking’ or distinctive patterns of folds, creases, and other marks on Burns’s manuscripts confirm. In the above verse to Tytler, we see that the verse epistle form here was more than a poetic affectation; this particular manuscript reveals distinctive signs of letterlocking, having been folded, addressed on one side to William Tytler of New Street, sealed (the circular trace of the red wax seal can be seen on the left of the countermark on figure 2), and posted to its addressee.

The Burns Paper Database is an attempt to compile such information. In the database, we record significant details of Burns’s manuscripts such as the name, holding institution, date, size of paper, watermarks, countermarks, and other relevant details. By taking digital images of manuscripts where possible, including through a cold-light source or lightbox, we can also record significant visible features, including watermarks and countermarks, which identify the papermaker and the
type of paper used by Burns, the majority of which is the ‘laid’ paper described above.8

The paper database is being compiled as a co-operative effort among partner institutions in the Burns Scotland organisation, which includes major libraries, museums and heritage organisations, and clubs linked with Burns in Scotland.9 The survey is being carried out by the Centre for Robert Burns Studies at the University of Glasgow as part of the AHRC project, “Editing Robert Burns for the 21st Century”. We are surveying a range of manuscripts in Burns’s hand held by a number of participating institutions, the aim being to provide a sample section of the paper used by Burns, and to allow comparison between manuscripts that are now distributed across various sites. Although the database is for the internal consumption of Burns Scotland partners in the first instance, potential applications may be found within the wider Burns community (indeed we have already met with Paisley Burns Club to compare an excise manuscript in their possession to an identical manuscript held by Dumfries and Galloway museums). Work began on the database in October 2013, and since then we have worked in close co-operation with partners in Burns Scotland to survey, at time of writing, some 220 manuscripts held in the National Library of Scotland, the Writer’s Museum in Edinburgh, and Dumfries and Galloway Museums, with work ongoing at the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum in Alloway. Even at this early stage, we have enough to begin to make some preliminary remarks, which I would like to do now.

One can tell a considerable amount from examination of Burns’s manuscripts. In addition to the readily apparent, for instance the type of document (poems, songs, correspondence, excise, other notes, fragments and miscellaneous), dates, addresses, and so forth, the database allows the collation of additional information on such things as postmarks, sizes, condition, information related to the source of paper (watermarks, countermarks), letterlocking and the distribution of material, and even the ‘afterlife’ of manuscripts. By the latter, I mean traces of what happened to the manuscripts after they were written by Burns or dispatched to correspondents, editors, and so on: in a number of instances, one sees

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8 In only two cases out of the more than 200 manuscripts surveyed so far have I encountered manuscripts purported to be by Burns written on ‘wove’ paper. This was a new type of paper attributed to James Baskerville and pioneered by James Whatman in Kent in the 1750s, which was produced on a mould with a fine ‘woven’ mesh of brass wires, leaving a smooth textile-like impression in contrast to the distinctive pattern of chain and laid lines of ‘laid’ paper. For a description of wove paper, see Hunter, pp. 125–30.

9 For further information about Burns Scotland, see <http://www.burnsscotland.com/about.aspx>.
signs of the afterlife of manuscripts in the years since their first use, the attempts at preservation and cataloguing, the marginalia and writing in other hands, the accompanying notes of authentication and provenance, the binding and mounting for collection and display, sometimes even the later distribution of manuscripts written with the same quire of paper or pages of the same verse manuscript.

As with any database, the information held in the Burns Paper Database is somewhat 'inert' until users run a 'query', which allows users to do a range of things: for example, checking the current distribution throughout collections of documents composed within a certain time range, or comparing watermarks and countermarks, or identifying the make of paper on which Burns wrote at a certain time. If, for example, we run a database query to check countermarks and arrange the results according to date, we see some quite telling results, as in the following selection (fig 4), covering part of 1786–87:

fig 4: Burns Paper Database query arranged by date and countermark

In this small sample alone we can already see paper from a range of different paper makers being used in a short, but significant, period in Burns's career. In May to June 1786, Burns is writing on Dutch paper from the firm of Lucas Van Gerrevink. This isn’t the only time Burns uses Dutch paper: he also writes at various points on paper marked ‘L.V.G’ for Lubertus van Gerrevink of North Holland, while other manuscripts have Dutch watermarks. Burns’s use of imported paper is not unusual, as the Dutch led in the manufacture of paper during the period, yet the database also reflects the growth of the British papermaking industry, which had been producing the finer ‘white paper’ for writing throughout the century and had risen steadily to help meet domestic demand and lowering reliance
on importations from Holland and the continent.\textsuperscript{10} The other papermakers in this small sample reflect the industry of English papermakers during the period.

We can therefore begin to see patterns suggesting that Burns is writing on specific sets of paper at specific times, as one might expect when one considers how he might have bought paper. Burns refers to the purchase of paper in his correspondence, as in the following line from a letter to Robert Cleghorn of October 1793:

\textit{I have just bought a quire of Post, & I am determined, my Dear Cleghorn, to give you the maidenhead of it.—Indeed, that is all my reason for, & all I can propose to give you by, this present scrawl.}\textsuperscript{11}

Besides the lewd metaphor, Burns also reveals the mundane detail that he bought paper in the standard imperial quire of 24 sheets, in this case the ‘Post’ size (paper was taxed and sizes standardised at the time). This detail alone suggests the possibility that we might find ‘clusters’ of paper used by the poet at specific periods, something that indeed seems to be borne out by a cursory analysis of the database. In our example above from the earlier period of 1786–87, Burns appears to be using, at the very least, paper from 6 different quires. Focussing further in on 1787, we can see that Burns is using paper from at least 4 different quires in this sample set alone. Early in the year, he writes to Isabella MacLeod on paper manufactured by Edward and John Band of Somerset. Towards the end of the year he is using paper by John Buttanshaw, of Hampton Mills, Kent. Kent was an area associated with papermaking, home also to such major names as Whatman, and, again in the sample above, Clement Taylor (c.1745-1804) of Maidstone, Kent, who hailed from a papermaking family, and also served as Member of Parliament for Maidstone, an individual whom the radical John Gale Jones describe as ‘a worthy and sensible man, and a strenuous friend to reform’.\textsuperscript{12}

Of course, that other ‘friend to reform’, Robert Burns did not choose such paper according to political sympathies in the same way as one might exercise ethical consumer choices today. The database presents some evidence that Burns simply used what was at hand, and it seems that Burns wasn’t really fussy about which paper he used. Indeed, the patriot bard of ‘Scots Wha Hae’

\textsuperscript{11} \textit{Letters}, II, 254–55.
and ‘Such a Parcel of Rogues in a Nation’ writes frequently on material from places as remote from Scotland as the south-east of England, or on paper with a watermark depicting Britannia with her Union Jack shield and trident, as in his verse epistles to William Tytler and to John Lapraik. What in other contexts acts as a patriotic symbol of the new British Imperial State, in this context merely represents the foolscap size of the paper Burns was able to acquire. Where a modern writer might be able to express a preference for favourite brands such as Moleskine for composition or Basildon Bond for letters, Burns would have been dependent on supply, which would have been variable in late eighteenth-century Scotland. As one might expect, there is little evidence of ‘brand loyalty’ in the database.

Let us focus in on a couple of examples which show Burns using what is at hand. My first example is from the fragments found among the manuscripts surveyed, in this case the epigram from Burns on Mr. Elphinstone, translator of Martial, now part of the Watson Collection held in the National Library of Scotland:

*Figure 5: Fragment: ‘On Elphinstone’s Translation of Martial’s Epigrams’ (courtesy of the National Galleries of Scotland and the National Library of Scotland).*

In a letter to Agnes McLehose dated 14 January 1788, Burns refers directly to this extempore composition:

*Did I ever repeat to you an epigram I made on a Mr Elphinstone, who has given a translation of Martial, a famous Latin poet? The poetry of Elphinstone can only equal his prose-notes. I was sitting in a merchant shop of my acquaintance, waiting somebody; he put Elphinstone into my hand, and*

13 National Library of Scotland, MS 586.
asked my opinion of it; I begged leave to write it on a blank leaf, which I did—\(^{14}\)

It is possible that the fragment in the image above is the blank leaf referred to in this letter. If so, this must be the period equivalent to the back of a cigarette packet: one never knows when inspiration might strike and when one might need to find something quickly to write upon, even when waiting in a shop and flicking, bored, through a perfunctory Classical translation.

A further example of Burns apparently using the paper at hand, appears in the following example:

Here we see Burns in his job as Exciseman, writing various work-related documents on paper made by R. Reid and Co., who must have been supplying paper for the Excise in the 1790s. Yet, Burns also wrote verse on paper made by Reid: the figure below from the Heron Ballads shows that this ballad was written on the back of excise paper from Reid, as was the reworking of Ramsay’s ballad ‘It was the Charming month of May’ composed around November 1794.\(^{15}\) In both cases, one simply has to flip the paper over to reveal the red ledger lines of excise paper.

\(^{14}\) Letters, I, p.206.

\(^{15}\) National Library of Scotland, MS 15959, Acc 9649.
Figure 7: Red ledger lines on rear of ‘It was the Charming month of May’
Is Burns taking paper home from the work? It seems, at least, from the frequent use of excise paper for purposes other than gauging, that Burns is content to ‘repurpose’ paper from this source. In this particular example, we also have some intriguing hints about the composition of this verse.
If one looks closely, the manuscript appears to be drafted in pencil, with some notable corrections, before being traced over later in ink. We find Burns writing in pencil elsewhere, such as in his tour journals when writing in a bumpy chaise would be awkward even with a portable ink-well, yet the use of pencil is not so frequent among the manuscripts surveyed for the database. Why then would Burns be writing on excise paper in pencil? If we cross-reference these features with a letter to editor George Thomson about the verse, November 1794, we find some intriguing detail about the specific composition of this verse that might explain its relatively unusual features:

*On my … visit the other day to my fair Chloris (that is the poetic name of the lovely goddess of my inspiration) she suggested an idea, which I in my return from the visit, wrought into the following Song…* 17

Did Burns actually put his pencil to writing this tribute to Jean Lorimer on the return journey from excise business in Kemmishall? The material in the database would seem to support such an interpretation.

There are many potential uses for the database, from revealing more about individual manuscripts, to comparing manuscripts held across different collections, right through to acting as a possible aid to authentication. On the latter point, excise paper is not in itself a guarantee of authenticity, as we know that forgers such as the infamous Alexander ‘Antique’ Howland Smith sourced appropriate eighteenth-century paper on which to commit forgeries of Burns. 19 However, in the case of the above song to Chloris, one can see from the database alone, even without checking provenance, that this manuscript fits the profile of paper used by Burns (either that or all five are spurious and some lucky forger has been extremely fortunate in sourcing eighteenth-century excise paper). It is not my aim, however, to make points about the authenticity of manuscripts, nor to limit the potential uses of the database with my own personal analysis; that will hopefully be the job of others, who might also find other creative ways to use the Burns Paper Database as a resource.

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17 *Letters*, II, p.322.

18 s.v. ‘Lorimer, Jean (1775-1831)’, *Burns Encyclopedia*, <http://www.robertburns.org/encyclopedia/LorimerJean17751511831_541.shtml> [accessed 24 June 2016]. Lorimor was the daughter of a local merchant who attracted the attention of gaugers other than Burns.

19 See for example Mackay’s account of Antique Smith in *The Complete Letters*, pp.764-66.
The following letter to Burns came to the Editor’s (really the Archivist’s) attention just as the edition was going to the press and it is included here for the interest of readers. It demonstrates how valuable letters to Burns can be in understanding the context of Burns life. It is transcribed from a printed source.

John Hutchinson came from an Ayrshire family and emigrated to Jamaica as did many young men of the time. Readers will see the plaudits for the Kilmarnock edition, sent by Burns with an earlier letter, and the comments on the use of Scots dialect. You will also see the poor opinion of the position Burns would have taken up had he indeed emigrated as planned the previous August. John’s brother, Cathcart Hutchison, was a bookkeeper on the Ayr Mount plantation where Burns was engaged to be employed.

A Letter from Mr. John Hutchinson
Jamaica, St. Ann’s, 14th June, 1787.

Sir,

I received yours, dated Edinburgh, 2d January, 1787, wherein you acquaint me you were engaged with Mr. Douglas of Port Antonio, for three years, at thirty pounds sterling a year; and am happy some unexpected accidents intervened that prevented your sailing with the vessel, as I have great reason to think Mr. Douglas’s employ would by no means have answered your expectations. I received a copy of your publications, for which I return my thanks, and it is my own opinion, as well as that of such of my friends as have seen them, they are most excellent in their kind; although some could have wished they had been in English style, as they allege the Scottish dialect is now becoming obsolete, and thereby the elegance and beauties of your poems are in a great measure lost to far the greater part of the community. Nevertheless there is no doubt you had sufficient reasons for your conduct perhaps the wishes of some of the Scottish nobility and gentry, your patrons, who will always relish their own old country style; and your inclinations for the same. It is evident from several passages in your works, you are as capable of writing in English as in the Scottish dialect, and I am in great hopes your genius for poetry, from the specimen you have already given, will turn out both for profit and honour to yourself and country. I can by no means advise you now to think of coming to the West Indies, as, I assure you, there is no encouragement for a man of learning and genius here; and am very confident you can do far better in Great Britain than in Jamaica. I am glad to hear my friends are well, and shall always be happy to hear from you at all convenient opportunities, wishing you success in all your undertakings. I will esteem it a particular favour if you will send me a copy of the other edition you are now printing.

I am, with respect, dear sir, yours, &c.

John Hutchinson.
The Twa Bards:
Robert Burns’ Reading of William Shakespeare
Patrick Scott

April 23, 2016, marked the four-hundredth anniversary of the Other Bard, William Shakespeare. In the early and mid-19th century, comparisons between Burns and Shakespeare were fairly common. Both were authors with worldwide significance, both seemed to transcend narrow particularities of time or ideology, and both produced many memorable lines that have passed into common speech. As Walter Scott once commented in his journal, “Long life to your fame and peace to your soul, Robert Burns! When I want to express a sentiment which I feel strongly, I find the phrase in Shakespeare—or thee.”¹ This year, at the Birthplace Museum, the annual January Burns conference associated with Glasgow’s Centre for Robert Burns Studies marked the Shakespeare anniversary by discussing the Two Bards, the first academic conference ever to do so.²

Fig. 1: The Droeshout and Beugo Engravings

¹ Donald A. Low, ed., Robert Burns: the Critical Heritage (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 260 (hereafter cited in the text as “Low”). This article originated in a small exhibit on Burns and Shakespeare drawn from the G. Ross Roy Collection, and all illustrations are reproduced courtesy of the Irvin Department of Rare Books & Special Collections, University of South Carolina Libraries.
The iconic status of Shakespeare and Burns as National Bards can be summed up by their best-known portraits. Droeshout’s frontispiece portrait of Shakespeare, in the first Folio, and the Nasmyth/Beugo frontispiece portrait of Burns, in the Edinburgh edition, are both instantly recognizable in a way matched by the portraits of few other Scottish or English writers. For both poets, also, their reputation as national figures has been closely related to the parallel development, helped by the nineteenth-century spread of the railway network, of the two birthplaces, Stratford-on-Avon and Alloway, as places of literary pilgrimage. This development even encouraged the production of similar souvenirs for the visitors, like the two Mauchline Ware boxes shown here, one with the familiar Burns cottage, and the other showing a distant view of the church where Shakespeare was buried. Mauchline Ware souvenirs were first produced in Mauchline, Ayrshire, for visitors to Burns country, before diversifying to mementoes of many other places, including Scott’s Abbotsford and Shakespeare’s Stratford.

![Fig. 2: Mauchline Ware boxes from Alloway and Stratford-on-Avon](image)

As Donald Low’s invaluable *Critical Heritage* volume shows, the comparison between the two poets dates back to Burns’s first appearance in “guid black prent.” Reviewing the Kilmarnock edition in 1786, Henry Mackenzie saw in Burns “that intuitive glance with which … Shakespeare discerns the characters of men” (Low p. 69), and James Anderson commented that Burns’s poetry “charms like the bewitching though

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irregular touches of a Shakespeare” (Low, p. 72). William Pitt, the Prime
Minister, remarked to a cabinet colleague “I can think of no verse since
Shakespeare’s which came so sweetly and at once from nature” (Low, p.
410). Walter Scott compared “Tam o’ Shanter” to Shakespeare (Low, p. 207).
Byron applied to Burns a phrase from Thomas Campbell’s Pleasures of Hope
about the patriot-poets who “rival all but Shakespeare’s name below” (Low,
p. 326).

There have always been dissenters, or at least critics who felt the
comparison might appear asymmetric. The English critic William Hazlitt
wrote that Burns showed “something of the same magnanimity, directness
and unaffected character,” but that he “is not like Shakespeare in the range
of his genius” (Low, p. 297). For Scots, the motive for dissent was perhaps
preemptive, trying to deflect English accusations of national pretension.
Notoriously, at the first Edinburgh performance of John Home’s play
Douglas (1756), a triumphant Scot had drawn lasting ridicule by shouting
out from the pit “Whaur’s your Wullie Shakespeare noo!” (or perhaps “Weel
lads, what think you of Wullie Shakespeare now?”). No one wants to risk
that kind of ridicule, and the anecdote often made Scots critics push Burns
firmly into a subaltern or secondary place. Henry Mackenzie himself had
muted his claim for Burns, adding “I am very far from meaning to compare
our rustic bard to Shakespeare” (Low, p. 69). Thomas Campbell disclaimed
“any comparison between the genius of the two bards” (Low, p. 323). Allan
Cunningham’s dissent took a different tack, rooted less in national cringe
than in national pride. Cunningham wrote that “in ease, fire and passion”
Burns was “second to none save Shakespeare,” but he was anxious to show
Burns as a “thorough Scotchman” who “owes nothing … of the materials
of his poetry to other lands.” Burns read Shakespeare, Cunningham noted,
“yet there is nothing of … Shakespeare about him” (Low, pp. 413, 411).

By the twentieth century fewer and fewer critics risked such
comparisons at all. As Murray Pittock notes, in 1936 the American Burns
scholar F. B. Snyder observed that “No-one today links [Burns’s] name
to Shakespeare as eulogists were inclined to do not long ago.” Modern
scholarly discussion is surprisingly sparse. The recent collection Burns and

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5 See also Murray Pittock, “A long farewell to all my greatness: the history of the reputation of Burns,”
in Murray Pittock, ed., Robert Burns and Global Culture (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press,
6 See, e.g., Willy Maley and Andrew Murphy, eds., Shakespeare in Scotland (Manchester: Manchester
7 Franklyn Bliss Snyder, Robert Burns, His Personality, His Reputation, and His Art (Alexander Lectures for
1936) (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1936), p. 42, quoted in Pittock, as in n. 5 above, p. 34).
Other Poets offers only scattered comments, and the Burns Encyclopaedia provides no entry for Shakespeare to complement its entries on Beattie and Shenstone. In the 120-plus years of the Burns Chronicle, I could find only one, very old, article with Burns and Shakespeare in the title. A search for “Burns” and “Shakespeare” through eighty years of the standard database of literary scholarship listing literary scholarship yielded just two items, by Robert Crawford and Nicola Watson, both focused a single aspect of the comparison, the institutionalization of the Two Bards as national icons or symbols discussed briefly above. Comment within books or essays on more general topics is harder to track down, but two critics (both cited further below) seem to me particularly astute, Christopher Ricks in his book about literary allusion, and Carol McGuirk in her essay on the aphoristic Burns. The only recent overview of the topic seems to be a short, lively newspaper article in the Independent by Gerard Carruthers.

Burns had been introduced to Shakespeare’s verse as a boy by his tutor John Murdoch. Unfortunately, Burns’s first reported reaction was negative, and that has overshadowed Murdoch’s lasting positive influence. Robert Burns’s brother Gilbert recalled that, when Burns was about nine years old, Murdoch, who was about to leave the area, brought to the cottage at Alloway two books, an English grammar and a copy of Shakespeare’s gory early tragedy Titus Andronicus, and when Murdoch began to read the play aloud to the Burns family, they cut the reading off in disgust and distress; William Burnes politely declined the gift, and Robert threatened that if the book were kept “he would burn it.”

10 Robert Crawford, “The Bard: Ossian, Burns, and the Shaping of Shakespeare,” in Maley and Murphy, Shakespeare and Scotland, as in n. 6 above, 124-140; Watson, as in n. 3 above.
It was, however, Murdoch who first gave Burns passages of Shakespeare to learn by heart. As Burns himself told Dr. Moore in his “autobiographical letter,” one of his schoolbooks under Murdoch was Arthur Masson’s *A Collection of English Prose and Verse*, and Masson had included seven well-known Shakespearean speeches.14

The poetry you learn young and know well is often the poetry you quote, and playfully misquote, for the rest of your life, and the speeches in Masson had a lasting impact on Burns.15 For instance, Masson prints in full Hamlet’s soliloquy “To be, or not to be” (*Hamlet*, III.i.56-90; Masson,

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Burns adapts phrases from it both playfully in August 1790 (“A consummation devoutly to be wished,” lines 63-64; *Letters*, II: 44), and more seriously on his deathbed in July 1796 (“an illness which has long been about me in all probability will speedil send me beyond that bourne whence no traveller returns,” lines 79-80; *Letters*, II: 387). Masson prints in full the ousted Cardinal Wolsey’s speech, “A long farewell to all my greatness” (*Henry VIII*, III.ii.351-373; Masson, p. 141). Over a four year period, Burns quotes three different parts from Wolsey’s speech: in April 1786 (“Such is the state of man: today he buds…then comes a frost,” lines 353-359; *Letters*, I: 37), in June 1787 (“he falls like Lucifer, never to hope again,” lines 372-373; *Letters*, I: 123), and again in March 1789 (“Vain pomp and glory of this world, I hate you,” line 366; *Letters*, II: 381).

Burns did not quote Shakespeare unquestioningly. Masson prints in full Jacques’s speech from *As You Like It*, on the Seven Ages of Man, beginning “All the world’s a stage” (*As You Like It*, II.vii.139-166; Masson, p. 138). In his letter to Mrs. Dunlop on November 24, 1787, Burns first denies, then adapts, and then pours scorn on, Jacques’s slickly-theatrical opening lines:

Nor do I know any more than one instance of a Man who fully and truly regards “all the world as a stage, and all the men and women merely players”; and who, the dancing bow excepted, only values these Players, these Dramatis Personae, who build Cities, or who rear hedges; who govern provinces, or superintend flocks, merely as they act their parts (*Letters*, I: 175).

The longest Shakespeare extract in Masson had especial significance. This is Othello’s defence of his courtship of Desdemona, where Masson ran together two speeches into one (*Othello*, I.iii.76-94, 124-170; Masson, pp. 143-145):

…Rude am I in my speech,  
And little bless’d with the soft phrase of peace ….  
And little of this great world can I speak …  
And therefore little shall I grace my cause  
In speaking of myself …  
I will a round unvarnish’d tale deliver (lines 81-82, 86, 88-90).

What caught Burns’s imagination was Shakespeare’s picture of Othello

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Shakespeare references in the text (play title, act, scene, and line numbers) are from W. J. Craig, ed., *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare* [Oxford Standard Authors] (London: Oxford University Press, 1905 etc., repr.1955); line numbering may differ in other editions where there are prose speeches earlier in the same scene.
as the outsider confronting Venetian snobbery. In January 1787, Burns used the opening lines (“Rude am I in my speech”) to introduce himself to the Edinburgh bookseller James Sibbald (Letters, I: 77-78), and in April 1787, writing to Mrs. Dunlop, he uses them again to explain his omission of polite compliments (Letters, I: 105). In some ways, we see Othello himself differently once we have recognized how much the young Burns would identify with Othello’s assertive independence as he faced an alien and hostile social environment.  

This early experience of Shakespeare’s poetry was only the start for Burns of much wider reading in Shakespeare’s plays. In the First Commonplace Book, he argues that reading Shakespeare (or other poets, or indeed fiddle-playing or song-mending or “some heart-dear bony lass”) is no more hindrance to piety and or virtue than “bustling and straining after the world’s riches and honours.” 18 Soon after he left Edinburgh for Ellisland, he arranged to buy himself a set of Shakespeare, writing to the Edinburgh bookseller Peter Hill in April 1789, “I want a Shakespear; let me know what plays your used copy of Bell’s Shakespear wants” (Letters, I: 391). Bell’s 20-volume Dramatick Works of Will. Shakespeare was a recent publication (in parts from 1784, in volumes from 1788), and 18 volumes from Burns’s set are preserved in the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum. 19

One special item in the Roy Collection takes us very close to Burns in the act of reading a passage from Shakespeare. Burns owned a single volume of Richard Cumberland’s essay-collection The Observer. 20 At various points in the book, Burns marked passages or penciled in marginal comments. For instance, against a lengthy quotation from Ben Jonson’s

17 Cf. Robert Crawford, The Bard, as in n. 14 above, pp. 245-246. Burns also repeatedly quoted another line from the same speech (“hair-breadth ‘scapes i’ th’ imminent deadly breach,” line 136): see Letters, I: 204, 216, and II: 38.
Masque of the Queens (on p. 146) he has written “Stupid nonsense.” Over the years, however, the pencil has rubbed off and some comments have become difficult to read or illegible. The essayist had compared Jonson’s treatment of witches to Shakespeare’s, quoting from both but without mentioning the source for a lengthy Shakespeare quotation. Burns’s note against the passage (p. 144) is now very faint, frustrating efforts to get beyond “Shakespeare [illegible]” for the catalogue description. However, with careful photography, some enhancement, and some imagination it is just possible to detect, for the first time in over a hundred years, and so confirm earlier reports, that what Burns wrote was “Shakespeare Macbeth.”

Burns was making a note for himself of the Shakespeare play from which the quotation came. The quotation wasn’t hard to recognize (after all, how may Shakespeare plays have witches?), but it is Burns writing Shakespeare’s name, and precious for that reason.

We can reconstruct in detail which Shakespeare plays it was that Burns read and knew from comments or references in his letters, especially as cited in the 2-volume Roy Letters, and from allusions or echoes in his poetry, especially as noted and indexed in Kinsley’s third volume. But it is worth remembering that even in such standard editions, annotation is necessarily selective, and more likely to document Burns’s direct quotations than his more glancing allusions. Different readers of Burns’s works will hear different Shakespearean echoes. By any count, however, Burns’s reading was extensive. In his letters alone, he quotes from at least seventeen different Shakespeare plays, more, in fact, than would be read by the average present-day undergraduate specializing in English, and he quotes from most of them several times.

Even in his first book, Burns was already confident enough as a poet to

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make explicit reference to Shakespeare. In “The Holy Fair,” for example, he adapts, Scotticizes, and footnotes, a phrase from *Hamlet*: “His talk o’ H-ll … Our vera Sauls does harrow” (Kinsley, I: 135, line 188: cf. *Hamlet*, I.v.15). In “A Dream,” he reminds the notoriously dissolute Prince of Wales that the wild young Prince Hal, an “unco’ shaver” when roistering with “funny, queer Sir John” in Shakespeare’s *Henry IV*, matured to become the hero of Agincourt in *Henry V*, and he provides a footnote for those who need reminding that “Sir John” was Shakespeare’s “Sir John Falstaff” (Kinsley, I: 268, lines 93-98). It is tempting, perhaps, to think of such footnotes as window-dressing, a slightly in-your-face assertion of being well-read. Certainly, they provide a rhetorical counterpoint to Burns’s 1786 preface, where he asked readers to “make every allowance for Education and Circumstances of Life” (Leask, *OERB* I: 73).

Similar allusions occur in later poems. One of the new poems added in the 1787 Edinburgh edition, “A Winter Night,” not only opens with an epigraph from the storm scene in Shakespeare’s *King Lear*, pitying the poor wretches attempting to defend their “houseless heads” against “seasons such as these” (Kinsley, I: 303; *King Lear*, III.iv.32-36), but also quotes Shakespeare later on, in the lines where the poem pivots from the harshness of the storm to what Burns argues is the worse harshness of man’s inhumanity to man:

Blow, blow, ye Winds, with heavier gust!
And freeze, though bitter-biting Frost!
Descend, ye chilly, smothering Snows
Not all your rage, as now, united shows
More hard unkindness, unrelenting,
Vengeful malice, unrepenting,
Than heav’n-illumined Man on brother Man bestows!
(lines 37-43).

As Kinsley points out, Burns here is blending together phrases and images from two different plays, Lear’s speech beginning “Blow windes” that wants the storm to put an end to “ingratefull Man” (*King Lear*, III.ii.1-9), and the song in *As You Like It* that begins:

Blow, blow, thou winter winde,
Thou art not so unkinde, as man’s ingratitude (*As You Like It*, II.vii, 174-5).

Shakespearean allusions or parallels even occur in Burns’s songs. As Carol McGuirk has pointed out, behind one of the most famous stanzas in “Scots wha hae” lies a similarly-structured speech in Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*, when Brutus asks: “Who is here so base that would be a
bondsman? … Who is here so rude that would not be a Roman? … Who is here so vile that will not love his country?” (*Julius Caesar*, III.i.31-36). As Professor McGuirk comments, Burns shifts the language from formality to direct Scots speech (“Wha will be a traitor-knave? … Wha sae base as be a Slave?”), but the Shakespearean echo is still clear.

For me, the most surprising, and revealing, allusion to Shakespeare was one that Kinsley missed. I had always thought of Burns’s poem to his first-born child, “A Poet’s Welcome to his Love-Begotten Child” (Kinsley I: 99-100) as among the most direct and personal of anything he wrote, genuinely affectionate though also reflecting some inner conflict. Partly because the Roy Collection has a manuscript of the poem, I must have read it a hundred times. But Christopher Ricks points out that, even in so personal a poem, Burns twice echoes and rewrites phrases from *King Lear*, both times from the opening scene where Gloucester talks with Kent about his first-born son, Edmund (“the Bastard”), whose mother “had a son for her cradle ere she had a husband for her bed” (*King Lear*, I.i.15-16). One can see why Gloucester’s speech would have caught Burns’s attention, and echoed in his mind when he wrote his own poem on a child that came “into the warld asklent,” but Burns’s tone is quite different. Where Gloucester tells Kent “this knave came somewhat saucily into the world before he was sent for” (*ibid.* 22-23), Burns writes affectionately,

> Welcome, my bonie, sweet, wee, Dochter!
> Tho’ ye come here a wee unsought for; … (lines 13-14),

and where Gloucester recalls “there was good sport at his making” (*ibid.* 23-24), Burns addresses the baby as “‘Sweet fruit o’ monie a merry dint” (line 25). Gloucester’s blokeish bravado also encompasses pride in his handsome son, but, partly because of the switch from talking *about* a grown son to talking *to* a baby daughter, partly by shifting from bantering English to affectionate Scots, the negative comments have been transformed. The Shakespearean allusions had become so fully part of Burns’s own imagination, and so fully integrated with his own voice, that till Ricks’s book in 2002 no one apparently ever noticed them.

These submerged echoes from *Lear* in “A Poet’s Welcome” occur several years before Burns asked Peter Hill about purchasing the set of Shakespeare, years before Burns had visited the bookshops or drawing rooms of Edinburgh, well before his first plans to become a published writer. Burns’s interest in Shakespeare is not some malign infection caught

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22 McGuirk, as in n. 11 above, pp. 173-174.
23 Ricks, *Allusion*, as in n. 11 above, pp. 64-65; and cf. McGuirk, p. 174 n. 20.
from mixing with the literati. Many more examples could be found from all phases of his life. In the years after Burns first read Masson, and first took Shakespeare to heart, he read much more widely in Shakespeare’s works, but he internalized what he read, and he drew on it, confidently and unselfconsciously. Burnsians need not be shamefaced about acknowledging Shakespeare’s “influence,” for Burns took it on his own terms. What Burns wrote in 1786 about his relation to his Scottish predecessors Ramsay and Fergusson applies equally to his use of Shakespeare: he had such precursors “in his eye” or memory, “but rather with a view to kindle at their flame, than for servile imitation” (Leask, OERB I: 72).

Red Rose in Brazilian Portuguese

The recent Burns MOOC, reported elsewhere in this edition, attracted participation and interest from around the globe. Part of the course involved a forum where participants could comment on any aspect of Burns’ life or works. A contributor from Brazil sent in her translation of the song “A red red Rose” into her native language. Appropriately, for this edition which also looks at translations of Burns, her contribution is copied here.

Rubra Rosa, Rosa Rubra

O meu amor é como uma rosa rubra, rubra.
Aquela que floresce em junho:
O meu amor é como uma melodia
Que docemente soa em harmonia.
É formoso como tu, minha linda,
E tão perdido de amor eu estou;
E ainda te amarei, minha querida,
Mesmo que todos os mares sequem.
Mesmo que todos os mares sequem, minha querida,
E as rochas se derretam com o sol:
E continuarei a te amar, minha querida,
Enquanto escoarem as areias da vida.
E te digo adeus, meu único amor!
E te digo adeus, por enquanto!
Mas eu voltarei, meu amor,
Mesmo de uma distância de dez mil milhas!
Jean Redpath, the Accidental Burnsian
Thomas Keith

“In her purity of line, precision of intonation and control of pitch, the Scottish traditional singer Jean Redpath is an unequaled vocal technician among contemporary folk interpreters. Miss Redpath’s voice is more than merely pretty. Her sweetness is backed by a fiber and quiet determination that lend everything she sings a deep, lived-in quality. With her arcing sense of melody and plain, unsyncopated phrasing, she is able to imbue everything she touches with a mysterious, slightly mournful quality that is the quintessence of a certain kind of folk classicism.”


“Serge Hovey plus Jean Redpath equals Burns the songwriter en route for liberation.”

—Hamish Henderson, from *The Tree of Liberty*, 1986

One of the many things with which Jean Redpath was consistently credited in the swell of obituaries following her death at the age of seventy-seven in August of 2014, was as one of the world’s foremost interpreters and champions of the songs of Robert Burns. The distinction of recording more Burns songs than anyone else thus far, at least 180, releasing eleven
full-length albums dedicated entirely to Burns, and helping to popularize and promote a greater appreciation for Burns around the world, are all accurately accomplishments of Jean Redpath. What is perhaps less widely known—though Redpath mentioned it fairly often in interviews—is that she didn’t come to the works of Burns on her own. Nor did she start out particularly interested Burns or his work or ever consider herself to be a real Burns scholar or Burnsian. Neither did Redpath plan to become a professional folksinger; nor did she grow up with a desire to move to the United States and spend half her time there. It would be more accurate to see Redpath’s work on Burns as one part of the much larger contribution she made to Scottish music and oral tradition in a life less designed and more serendipitous—as some creative lives turn out to be when we dig down a little bit past the bio in the program or on the record sleeve.

Growing up in a home of “singers and word mongers”—both her father, Alexander, who played the hammer dulcimer, and her mother, Bluebell, came from musical families—Redpath didn’t think of music as something to do as a career, though she acknowledged that she was “already recognized as ‘having a voice’” by the time she was ten. In the Redpath home, songs were shared by family members and neighbours and the oral tradition was instilled in the young Jean at an early age. That Redpath never learned to read music and received no formal music education became one of her calling cards as a folklorist, teacher, and singer. At sixteen, she went to a vocal teacher because, as she told an interviewer for The New York Times in 1980, “people kept telling my parents, ‘You should do something with her voice.’” The teacher they found played piano and guitar, and sold sheet music. At the first lesson, “he disappeared and came back with music for me to sing: ‘When the Heather Gleams Like Stardust on the Hills’—the kind of music I abhor!” she recalled.

It wasn’t long after she enrolled at Edinburgh University in 1954 as Medieval Studies major, that she met the poet, teacher, song collector, and ethnomusicologist Hamish Henderson at the School of Scottish Studies and everything changed for Jean Redpath. Henderson’s achievements are many, but his most important impact on young Jean was his investigation of Scots songs and melodies through field research, performances, and recordings, of native, untrained singers of the oral tradition such as Jeannie Robertson and Jimmie MacBeath. By 1956, Redpath discovered that the ballads and comic songs she had sung with her family since childhood had a name: folk music. Redpath began to share her extensive repertoire of traditional Scottish ballads learned from her mother and, under Henderson’s mentorship, to make connections to the origins of the songs
via oral tradition and printed sources. She joined the University Folksong Society and in 1960 became president of the club for a year.

The story of how Redpath became a professional singer via good fortune and coincidence is fairly well known by now. Briefly: in 1961, at the age of twenty-three, she went to visit a friend in California and while there was called out of the audience to get on stage and sing at a hootenanny. Terrified, she did it anyway; she was adept and funny, the audience loved her. After writing to Henderson about her experience, he arranged through an agent for Redpath to perform in Philadelphia where, upon her arrival, she discovered that the club owner had fled town without paying any of the previous performers. Redpath accepted a ride to an apartment in New York City where she found herself in the middle of a jam session with Bob Dylan, Rambling Jack Elliott, and the Greenbrier boys. This chance meeting led to her first paid performance at the famous Gerde's Folk City in Greenwich Village six weeks later.

Among the praise Robert Shelton showered on the young Scottish singer in his November 16, 1961 review of that performance in *The New York Times*, he noted that, “Miss Redpath would charm an audience with her repertoire alone—some 250 songs, enough to keep a ceilidh going for hours. These include luminously poetic classic ballads, earthy bothy ballads from plowmen’s shacks, mouth music, in which Scots supply their accompaniment for dancing reels and strathspeys; songs of Robbie Burns, and a round of drinking, bawdy, lyric love, and children’s songs.” Unaccompanied, in that same performance, she sang the traditional ballads “Lord Randall,” “Dowie Dens of Yarrow,” “Wars of Germany,” and “Willie’s Rare.”

Based on glowing reviews and ongoing performances in New York and at folk music festivals around the country, Redpath was offered recording contracts. The choice of what to record was most often based on her performance repertoire. Much can be gleaned about her approach to research and song collecting from the detailed liner notes to all her albums. The context she gives for a lyric or a tune or a song often includes a social element, an historical or musical commentary, often a printed source, and Redpath most frequently ends her notes with a sentence that begins something like, “I learned this from the singing of . . .” And she goes on to identify the person from whom she first heard the song, always linking her performance to the flow of oral tradition. It was the most defining aspect of Redpath’s singing, performing, recording, and teaching career: her role as a living connection to the folk song traditions of Scotland.
Redpath's first seven albums, recorded from 1963 to 1975, contain ninety-five songs, ten of which were written, reworked, or collected by Burns. So, Burns songs were most certainly part of her repertoire, mostly learned from her mother, but not her primary focus by any measure. This changed in 1973 when Hamish Henderson introduced Redpath to the American composer Serge Hovey (1920-1989). Known best for his modern scores for film, documentaries, and dance dramas, adaptations of African and Yiddish music, and for composing the Off-Broadway musical of Yiddish stories, *The World of Sholem Aleichem*, Hovey had studied composition with modernists Arnold Shoenberg and Hans Eisler. He had also been working for twenty years on what he called *The Robert Burns Songbook*, a compilation of 323 Burns songs that he reunited with the original melodies for which Burns composed the lyrics, all with original settings by Hovey. When the American composer traveled to Edinburgh to meet Henderson he was received with curiosity and skepticism until he played his settings of “Rattlin’ Roarin’ Willie” and “Hey Ca’ Thro.” Henderson described his response to Hovey’s Burns settings in Timothy Neat’s 1988 documentary about the Hovey/Redpath collaboration, *The Tree of Liberty*: “The magic of Serge Hovey’s arrangements, for me, is that while they draw on a tremendous rich complex tapestry of musical research and achievement, they preserve and they glorify the native features of Scots music, and in doing so they do due honor to Burns’s marvelous achievement, round and fill out all he wanted for Scots traditional song and his own part in it.”

Henderson felt Burns needed to be rescued from the trappings, burdens, and the misconceptions of his fame and the reduction of his talent to “a sort of literary equivalent of Lenin in his tomb,” which had obscured his real message. He declared in the documentary that the key to salvaging Burns’s reputation was the songs, “And specifically the great song complex on which Serge Hovey has been laboring, to which he has devoted so much selfless love.” That it was an American and not a Scot did not bother Henderson, who felt the excavation and animation of Burns’s massive song cycle was long overdue.

Key to funding a proposed twenty-album recording project were Henderson’s recommendation and the participation of Jean Redpath, who met Hovey in Middletown, Connecticut where she was teaching at Wesleyan University. The two had an instant personal rapport, according to Hovey. And Redpath, who had so often affirmed that she “managed somehow or other to avoid ever learning to read music and also avoiding any kind of formal voice training,” responded strongly to Hovey’s artistry as a musician and his passion for Burns. In *The Tree of Liberty*, Redpath
explained, “In 1973 I met Serge Hovey and since then he has affected quite enormous changes in my musical attitudes.” In a radio interview from the late 1960s, Hovey said of Burns, “You have to look to the very summit of human cultural achievement to talk about Burns—you can say Shakespeare, you can say Da Vinci, you can think of a name like Beethoven.”

Their mismatched musical backgrounds presented a challenge which Redpath and Hovey overcame fairly quickly. In a 1990 interview for The Burns Chronicle, Redpath recalled, “We had a couple of run-ins to begin with, but they were always very amiable because of the mutual respect we have for each other. I never had any formal musical training and it took Serge quite a while to adjust to someone that basically said, ‘What do you mean the fourth measure? Show me, tell me, play it. We both had to compromise.’” In The Tree of Liberty Redpath reckoned that living in America and working with Hovey provided her “a little bit of objectivity about my own tradition and [I went] back to it almost as a non-Scot and had a look at it from a distance.” It was an understanding of Burns that Redpath may not have had if she’d stayed at home: “It’s Scottish double-standard is what it is; if isn’t homegrown why would anybody give it any credence and if it is homegrown, how could it be worth anything?”

Producing the albums was an intense and time-consuming process, made even more challenging because Hovey was living with ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis), known as “Lou Gehrig’s Disease,” a degenerative motor neuron condition for which there is yet no cure. Beginning in 1983 he needed the assistance of a breathing machine and could only communicate by responding to a letter board with blinks and small facial movements. Redpath felt that his determination and endurance in the face of illness were “... an incredible measure of the man’s drive and commitment.”

The Songs of Robert Burns, Volume 1 was released in 1976 by Philo Records in the US and Greentrax Records in the UK, followed by The Songs of Robert Burns, Volume 2 in 1980. By the time of Serge Hovey’s death in 1989, six volumes in the series had been recorded and released, with a seventh in preparation that was completed by Hovey’s eldest son, Daniel. Most of the songs on these seven albums had never been recorded and nearly as many had not been heard in concert. Hovey made sure that at least one song from The Merry Muses of Caledonia was part of each album, and many songs, such as “My Luve’s Like a Red, Red Rose” and “Auld Lang Syne” were sung and recorded for the first time using the tunes to which Burns actually wrote them. While the initial critical reception in Scotland
was, and remains, mixed because of Hovey’s often dramatic and sometimes contemporary arrangements, the Hovey/Redpath recordings sold well in both the UK and the US. They remain in print to this day and they opened a new chapter in the ongoing reception of Robert Burns in popular culture.

Around 1981, under the supervision of Professor Donald A. Low of Stirling University, Redpath began recording all the songs from *The Scots Musical Museum*, a capella or accompanying herself on guitar, which were released in four volumes on cassette by Callandar Records in the early 1980s. The combined impact of the Hovey and Low recordings resulted in Redpath becoming, aside perhaps from John Cairney, the living public figure most strongly associated with Robert Burns. For the rest of her life, whether giving public performances, appearing on Garrison’s Keillor’s American radio show, *A Prairie Home Companion*, or teaching, Redpath found herself as a de facto ambassador for Burns, or at least for his songs. However, as Burns was not her only interest, Redpath kept on performing and recording traditional Scots songs and ballads. She participated on albums of American gospel, folk, and Christmas songs, and also released her own Christmas album; a collection of Celtic children’s songs and lullabies; in addition to albums dedicated to Scottish poetry set to music; songs of emigrant Scots; an album of songs of Caroline Oliphant, known as Lady Nairne; the Scottish ballad; and music for the Scottish fiddle, among others. Her impressive discography of at least thirty-five albums not only demonstrates Redpath’s diversity and longevity but also her exceptional popularity, which continues to this day.

While recordings of Burns songs began to appear on LPs in the 1950s—with a flood of albums released for the bicentennial of his birth in 1959—even then, and throughout the Folk Song Revival of the 1960s, only a few dozen Burns songs were recorded. What the popularity and diversity of the Hovey/Redpath and *Scots Musical Museum* recordings of Burns songs did was open up the full scope and breadth of Burns achievement beyond academia and archives, to contemporary singers and musicians who seized upon the enormous treasure trove as new material. Hovey, Low, and Redpath’s influence led to the wide range of Burns songs in the plethora of Burns recordings that we have today, including the Linn recordings of *The Complete Songs of Robert Burns* in twelve volumes and numerous recordings of Burns songs from *The Merry Muses of Caledonia* and from Thompson’s *Select Scottish Airs*.

After Hovey’s death, however, there remained the question of whether or not, and how, the Hovey/Redpath project would be completed.
Redpath lamented in an interview with *The Scotsman* in July 1997, that she found herself “between a rock and hard place. The whole thing is on hold. I haven’t given up on Burns—it’s just that I’m having a breather.” The challenge was how to carry on with Hovey’s widow, Esther, and son, Daniel—both dedicated to continuing Hovey’s work, which for them was a family endeavor they had been intensely committed to for thirty years—yet go forward without Serge Hovey himself, who was the guiding force behind the project. At the rededication of the Burns Statue in Central Park, New York City in October of 1996, I had a conversation with Jean Redpath about this, asking her specifically what the future would be for the Hovey/Redpath recordings. After several gracious and diplomatic responses similar to the one in *The Scotsman*, she made it clear that, when it came to the Hovey/Redpath recordings of Burns songs, her primary connection was to Serge Hovey, not Burns. Redpath shared the same sentiment directly and good-naturedly during a live interview with Leslie Duncan in 2009, at a Burns conference at the University of South Carolina commemorating the 250th anniversary of Burns’s birth. She went even further to point out that among the assembled there were “real Burns scholars,” but that she was not a Burns scholar and did not particularly identify as a Burnsian. Though it may have seemed a surprising demurral, she was quite sincere and spoke often that weekend about her deep appreciation of Burns songs and how much she had learned from Donald Low and Serge Hovey. Redpath’s appearance at that Burns conference—similar to her presence at Burns events around the world for over twenty years after Hovey’s death—spoke just as loudly about her continued commitment to the Bard, reluctant or accidental Burnsian though she may have been.
The beginning of a new bibliography of Robert Burns editions

Craig Lamont

It is now more than fifty years since the last major bibliography of Robert Burns by J. W. Egerer (1964). Egerer's work is widely used as a standard reference by researchers, collectors, and book dealers. Such was its impact that G. Ross Roy once wrote that he felt special satisfaction whenever he managed to obtain an edition of Burns that Egerer had not seen.¹ Egerer was working, not only before the Kinsley Poems (1968) and the Roy Letters (1985), but in the pre-internet age, before online catalogues of library holdings, before digitization, and before inquiries could be made by email. Over the past fifty years, researchers have turned up a number of additions or new discoveries.² Studies of Robert Burns in every respect continue to gain ground, particularly at the University of Glasgow, where the Centre for Robert Burns Studies secured a major AHRC research grant in 2009. Along with PhD studentships and multimedia projects, the grant supports the multi-volume edition of Robert Burns' work currently being published by Oxford University Press. Because of this, it seemed more than appropriate to begin a new comprehensive bibliography suitable for the twenty-first century.

Since November 2015, in my capacity as a Research Assistant I will see this project through until the end of August 2016. This window of time means I need a cut-off date in the long and complex history of printed Burns works. I am working from the Kilmarnock Edition (1786) through to The Poetical Works of the Late Robert Burns (Newcastle: 1802). I will outline here the reasons behind the demand for a new bibliography, the processes going into it, the difficulties it entails, and its usefulness to Burns scholars and enthusiasts even at this initial stage.

Why a new bibliography?

My work on this new bibliography has Egerer’s from 1964 at its core. The Egerer volume serves as a sort of check-list, a helpful guide in the process of collating the bibliographical details of each edition. Most of the time I concur with Egerer, but there are some instances when a slight difference

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in the preliminary contents prompts a second look. While Egerer’s work must be acknowledged, it was inevitable that more discoveries be made since it went to print. For instance, Egerer had not seen *Sonnets from the Robbers* (Edinburgh: George Gray, 1799), containing Burns’ “Bruce’s Address,” so it does not appear in Egerer’s chronological rundown.\(^3\) It is also worth re-reading the chief aim of Egerer’s bibliography: “to emphasise the first appearances in print of Burns’s writings.”\(^4\) He did not list the full contents of volumes, only noting items that had not previously been published. The Glasgow project seeks to provide comprehensive details about each main edition where Egerer had not, as well as renewing or correcting previous or outdated assumptions about first appearances and authorship of certain poems and songs. The other main advantage of beginning a new bibliography now is the availability of digitized editions and links that connect the reader to a host of libraries around the world which contain the edition in question. This will be made clear in the next section of this piece. For the same reasons that the *Burns Chronicle* itself is being digitized for wider access, making use of extant digital networks would better serve all readers of a new bibliography.

The other main drive is to make the bibliography more user-friendly. One often finds problems in using a catalogue or bibliography older than Egerer’s. It is not that they were not comprehensive for their time, but that the entries were worked in a tradition of being descriptive up to a point, with an emphasis on the number of different items listed rather than on treating each edition with equal time and care. In James Gibson’s *The Bibliography of Robert Burns* (1881) for example, there are understandable efforts made to be more descriptive of the first dozen editions in terms of their significance, and, in certain cases, some mention of the portrait (if any) and which poems and songs were included. This level of description tapers off as Gibson works into the nineteenth century. Egerer does the same in his book, choosing to reduce the level of description of each edition from 1803 onwards, whereupon he also begins to summarise title-pages rather than offering them in quasi-facsimile. Comments are still given, but his format, signatures, and contents fields disappear. Given his aim to emphasise first appearances, the watershed of 1802/3 in his style is by no means a weakness, though it falls before Cromek and before the later editions of Currie; it merely suggests the point at which certain details become less important. It does however lead to inevitable gaps in the reader’s insight.

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3 See Sudduth, *The G. Ross Roy Collection*, p. 34; cf. Egerer, p. 37, footnote 7. My thanks to Professor Patrick Scott for helping me identify this and other gaps.
The workings of the new bibliography

When this project was initiated I was helped by several professionals to outline the best way to proceed. The project’s steering committee, headed up by Gerard Carruthers, includes Patrick Scott of the University of South Carolina (and editor of Studies in Scottish Literature), Robert Betteridge of the National Library of Scotland, and Dr. John Burnett, formerly of the National Museums Scotland. This committee has helped define and develop the project, offering expert advice on specific editions and the overall format of the work.

Each entry contains at least seven main fields: title-page (quasi-facsimile); publisher; format; contents; consulted; references; notes. Some editions might also include an ‘illustration’ field, to account for portraits, engravings, and vignettes. In the case of the eighteenth-century works, there will also be a field linking the reader to the ESTC (English Short Title Catalogue) number, which connects them to the British Library’s record of that edition. Much of the information gathered can be gleaned from the older bibliographies, so the emphasis on my part was to provide more information. Undoubtedly, the core improvement here is the inclusion of an extensive ‘contents’ field, going beyond Egerer’s useful but short description – wherein the layout of the poems and songs are indistinguishable as ‘text’ – to provide a replication of the layout of the titles of poems and songs. The aim is to allow the reader to locate every printed instance of any given poem or song in Burns’s lifetime and in subsequent early printed editions. Here is the first entry. It is abbreviated to save space, as many entries are a few pages long. Notes on the abbreviations are added at the end of each field in italics:

It would be difficult to overstate the effectiveness of the steering committee, whose combined and individual efforts helped the project off the ground so quickly. It should also be stated here that Robert Betteridge provided training in bibliographical description at the National Library of Scotland, for which I am very grateful.
The Kilmarnock Edition (1786)6

Title-page: POEMS, | CHIEFLY IN THE | SCOTTISH DIALECT, | BY | ROBERT BURNS. | [decorative rule] | THE Simple Bard, unbroken by rules of Art, | He pours the wild effusions of the heart : | And if inspir’d, ‘tis Nature’s pow’rs inspire ; | Her’s all the melting thrill, and her’s the kindling fire. | ANONYMOUS. | [decorative rule] | KILMARNOCK: | PRINTED BY JOHN WILSON. | [double rule] | M, DCC, LXXXVI.

Publisher: John Wilson (1759-1821).
Format: 8vo; a4 A-2F4 [The size of each consulted copy will also be given for comparison with Egerer].


Notes: Digital copy at http://digital.nls.uk/74571116. Redacted names: p. 69, James Smith (1765-c. 1823) [Much more on this and other copies are given in this field, distinguished using the square-bracketed numbers in the ‘consulted’ field. They often include publication history, print run, and original binding (when known). It is the most expandable field, taking note of as much information as possible from well-known anomalies in print to the referencing of Burns’ contemporaries].

ESTC No: T91548

6 This represents an example of the new bibliography as carried out by the author, which is at this stage still a work in progress. Although it is unlikely, there could of course be further modification in format before the end of the project.
Besides the contents page offering a better insight into the edition, the ‘Consulted’ field keeps track of the location of the copy I have been able to examine, though I am aiming to describe an ideal or representative copy of the book as it was first published, not to describe details of individual copies. The record of copies consulted could prove most useful in the event a copy is lost or damaged, and in the event that someone from another institution finds differences in a copy of the same edition. Although many errors and inconsistencies have been well documented by Burnsians (such as the famous ‘stinking’ misprint), much more can now be traced. One of the most striking of these is the misprint of ‘Nineteenth’ in the title of ‘The First Six Verses of the Ninetieth Psalm,’ found in the first pirated Belfast edition of Burns’ Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect (1787).

Once each edition has been collated to the same extent as the above, attention then turns to the structure of the bibliography. The bibliography follows the general style of the Pittsburgh Series in Bibliography. Joel Myerson’s Emily Dickinson bibliography for that series is structured as follows: A. Separate Publications; B. Miscellaneous Publications; C. First Book and Pamphlet Appearances; D. First-Appearance Contributions to Magazines and Newspapers; and so on. Egerer’s Burns is split into dated editions; undated editions; translations; and original material first published in periodicals. One of the issues here is the handling of the ephemeral works such as chapbooks among the main editions. A particularly testing period is 1799: the Glasgow-based Poetry; Original and Selected printed by Brash and Reid was still on the market and Stewart and Meikle had entered the fray with The Jolly Beggars, The Kirk’s Alarm, and more. These are sandwiched chronologically between the 1798 Philadelphia and the 1800 two-volume Belfast editions, even when the date of the chapbooks is unclear. It would therefore prove more beneficial to modify the Pittsburgh style, by introducing a distinct section for the chapbooks. For instance: A. Primary Editions (i.e. all those which are formally set out to be comprehensive or containing new material, often titled Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect; The Works of Robert Burns; or Poems, by Robert Burns); B. Chapbooks and Pamphlets (i.e. all those smaller printed efforts such as ‘Alloway Kirk’ and the Elegy on the Year Eighty-Eight); C. Contributions; D. First-Appearances in Periodicals. C and D would certainly feature less descriptive entries than those in A and B: it would be counter-productive to collate the entire contents, for instance, of Poems by David Sillar (1789), just to capture the layout of Burns’ sole contribution (‘To the Author’).

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Going forward

At present, any plans to capture the appearance of Burns’ works in periodicals are tentative. There may only be time in the project to facilitate the completion of the main editions, chapbooks, and contributions by Burns. The other major item of Burns interest to be handled with care in this bibliography is the musical editions. There are three that fit the remit of this bibliography: The Scots Musical Museum (1787-1803); A Selection of Scots Songs (1793-4); and A Select Collection of Original Scottish Airs (1793-1818). These multi-volume musical editions are included in Egerer’s chronological bibliography, but they are handled in the same manner as the formal editions. Not only does this raise questions about authorship (how many of these songs were truly written by Burns?), but it assumes the same bibliographical method for a very distinct type of book. In my work, I have taken the advice of colleagues to include these editions, but to avoid collating the contents in the same manner as regular editions. To describe the layout of song titles across several volumes and years of print culture and ignoring the layout of the music itself would be less than ideal, suggesting perhaps that a future extension of this project would require the assistance of specialists in music of the period.

I conclude this piece by mentioning how this bibliography seeks to retain the most traditional values of bibliography while bringing new findings to the public realm. The use of web links in particular will help this work become as usable as possible. When it is made available online, the main advantages it will have over printed bibliographies are its instantaneous accessibility and downloadable with the capacity to make corrections and updates. An old chapbook might be resting in the bowels of a library somewhere, waiting to be catalogued. A digital rather than print bibliography allows for the quick insertion of any new material. Although I am currently working to the close of 1802 in the long history of Burns’ print culture, the bibliography will serve as a meaningful and overdue resource to everyone interested in the Bard.

At the Source of the Russian Reception of the Poetry of Robert Burns

Professor D. N. Zhatkin

In the early 19th century the works of Burns were introduced in Russian in the form of prosaic word-for-word translations characterized by deliberate Russification, in the form of free romantic interpretations of the originals by Burns, as well as some inept attempts of their reading by minor writers. The very first Russian translation of Burns appeared on the pages of the sentimentalist magazine *Hippocrene, or Joy of lubalove* in 1800, four years after the death of the Scottish poet. It was “Address to the Shade of Thomson” rendered in prose by an unidentified translator.

Yu. D. Levin, who studied not only Burns in Russia, but also the influence of English poetry on Russian sentimentalism (in particular, the impact of *The Seasons* by James Thomson in Russian literature from the late 18th to

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1 The translation of this text was published only once, and with distortions of the text (*brings* instead of *uplifts*, *the oldest* instead of *growing old*, *self-encouraging* instead of *self-approving*, etc.) [2 pp229–230].
the early nineteenth centuries) [see:3 pp195–297], rightly believed that this translation focused attention not on Burns but on Thomson. Two more works devoted to Thomson, published in Hippocrene, or Joy of Lubalove in 1800, demonstrate this publication’s interest in Thomson rather than in Burns. The authors of these works, W. Colleens (in the magazine Colleen [4 pp145–148] and W. Thomson (in the magazine signed by W.T. [5 pp159–160].

The earliest literary-critical mention of Robert Burns in Russia dates back to 1821. The anonymous author of the foreword to the Collection of Sample Russian Works and Translations in Verse described the Scottish poet, obviously based on information drawn from Western European editions: “Robert Burns – a Scottish poet, who was singing of his love for the country, the beautiful coast of Devon ……., the warrior returning to the parent’s hut, folk beliefs, pleasant rural evening with the children, ardent and invincible love, his funny satirical ……. fictions, animated by strong and simple, attractive and tender feelings” [6 ppXC-XCI].

Burns owes his first popularity among Russian readers to the blind poet I. I. Kozlov, who published a short book Rural Saturday Night in Scotland. A Free Imitation of R. Burns by Kozlov published by the Printing House of the Department of National Education in 1829. It contained not only the piece in the title, “The Villager’s Saturday Night” (“The Cotter’s Saturday Night”) but also a free interpretation of “Stanzas to a Mountain Daisy” under the title “To field Daisy, which Robert Burns, Tilling his Field, Accidentally Cut with Iron Plough in April 1786” [7]. In this free imitation our attention can be drawn to such essential deviations from the original as the replacement of Burns’s dedication to Robert Aiken with a dedication to Al. An. V…ka (Alexandra Andreevna Voeikova, by then deceased), where the sufferings caused by loss of the close friend were combined with the sorrows of his own destiny. There also appeared an additional final stanza, addressed to “Holy Russia” which called for the expression patriotic feelings, and expressed hope for the prosperity of the country in compliance with the laws of faith and honor, loyalty to art. In “Stanzas to a Mountain Daisy” I. I. Kozlov was impressed by the desire of the Scottish poet to show the


3 I. I. Kozlov’s free translations were reprinted in subsequent years [see. the most authoritative publication in the Great Poet’s Library Series: 8 pp161–171].
strength of love and powerlessness of the person before Fate. In lyrical fashion, he aspired to emphasize his regret about the inevitability of an evil fate and his remorse for what has happened (“Oh, crimson flower! / I met, poor you / Not in a good luck: I cut you off / In all of your beauty / The pearl of valleys, it’s impossible for me / To save you!” [8 p170]). The text then goes on to create an image of the heavenly shelter, waiting for the person after earthly vanities and sufferings are over. An important feature of I.I. Kozlov’s versions of Burns was that he saturated them with religious motives, reasoning about obedience to the higher will, which were more consistent with the mentalities of the blind singer himself than with the reflections of Burns4.

The publication of I. I. Kozlov’s book roused the response of N. A. Polevoy who in a long review on pages of the Moscow Telegraph negatively assessed the work of the Russian poet as a whole. The main mistake of the interpreter according to Polevoy was the poet’s desire to show Burns as “an ordinary peasant, who among other things trolls something on a poetic flute” [14 p206]. Thus, in the version of I. I. Kozlov Burns appeared absolutely altered – “not as an ardent Scottish singer, burned in the fire of passion, but as an ordinary villager, who was very nice to talk about his rural way of life” [14 p206]. And although Kozlov remarked that he did not make a translation but a free imitation, this fact according to Polevoy could not reduce the accusation because the Russian poet “undertook to convey ……… Burns”, but not to a small extent disclosed the main thing – “the nature of Burns’s poetry” that needed to be represented but was not both in the “imitation, and in the faithful translation” [14 p208].

In his review to Rural Saturday Night in Scotland Polevoy published his word-for-word translation of the poem “A Bard’s Epitaph”. Not having overcome the difficulties of the language of Scots, Polevoy loosely interpreted in many places, not restraining himself so that he added in some new details so that the correlation of his work with the original was sometimes hardly perceptible:

Эпитафия певцу

Если буйство воли увлекает тебя и воображение одерживает над тобою победу; если небо создало тебя столь пылким, что ты не можешь размышлять; столь пламенным, что ты не можешь носить цепей; если ты чувствуешь себя непокорным и гордым, и не можешь ни ползать, ни молить: приближься, вот урок тебе! Это могила одного

из твоих братьев, столь же ничтожного, столь же безумного, как и ты. Приближься, невольник своих помыслов! приближься, гляди и плачь!

Ты родился поэтом и Муза твоя дика?.. Ты страшишься толпы и в пустыне повторяешь стихи, слагаемые тобою для собственного наслаждения?.. Я, бедный певец, молю тебя: не проходи мимо, не почтив меня сердечным вздохом! Я жил, так же, как и ты. Я был поэт, и жизнь моя была продолжительное мучение.

Хочу, чтобы ты остановился на этом дёрне; хочу, чтобы пример мой устрашил тебя. И я, как ты, давал благие советы; я руководил других и заблуждался сам. Я пробежал поприще жизни как упоенный: стремление моря не столь быстро, пламя не столь пожирающее! Деятельный ум, строгая разборчивость, легкая чувствительность, всё нежное дружбы, всё огненное любви, всё влекло меня к одной гибели. Я пал под ударами своих заблуждений: я обесславил свою славу.


In “The Survey of Russian Literature” of 1829, printed in the almanac Dennitsa (“Morning Star”) 1830, I. V. Kireevsky hardly says a word about Kozlov’s book, having noted that the only advantage of it was the touching dedication to the dead A. A. Voeikova: “Saturday Night”, as an imitation of Burns, is remarkable for the enclosed verse devoted to the death of A. A. Voeykova, where one could see the touching feeling of the soul, able to love the beautiful”[15 p45]. V. G. Belinsky critically received Rural Saturday Night in Scotland and in 1841 he wrote in the article from Collected Poems of Ivan Kozlov that “this is not a translation of Burns but an arbitrary imitation of the poet”. He concludes: “It is a pity! Because Kozlov could perfectly translate this excellent play (sic), but as an imitation it looks somewhat strange” [16 p72]. V. G. Belinsky wondered why “after a wonderful appeal of the Scottish poet to his Homeland” the translator (in the XIX stanza) suddenly turned to Russia: “We assume that his appeal is full of patriotic fever; but whether it is appropriate – that is the question! <...> Scottish life shown by Burns in his beautiful idyll is as similar to the lives of our men, women, children, boys
and girls, as the muse Calliope is similar to Kheraskov” [16 p72].

In the Research Library of Tomsk State University among the books previously owned by V. A. Zhukovsky there is an edition of Rural Saturday Night in Scotland by Kozlov, pp1–2 had an autograph of the poet-translator and a dedication to “dear Zhukovsky”. This has been lost, but a trace of an autograph still can be seen on the title-page [19 p35]. Probably, this was the book that inspired Zhukovsky to create the poem “Confession of Basisdamage Scarf” (Author’s dating of the rough autograph preserved in the National Library of Russia (list 1, №36, p. 9–10),–July 22 1831. [20 p659]). It is a pastiche of one of the works of Burns – the famous “John Barleycorn”. From the very beginning of Zhukovsky’s text the connection between these two works becomes quite obvious:

Я родился простым зерном;
Был заживо зарыт в могилу;
Но Бог весной своим лучом
Мне возвратил и жизнь и силу.

И долговязой коноплёй
Покинул я земное недро;
И был испытан я судьбой, –
Ненастье зная, зная ведро [21 c.272].

However, despite the evidence, the parallel between “John Barleycorn” by Burns and “Confession of Basisdamage Scarf” by V.A. Zhukovsky has been noticed only recently – in 2000 – by K. N. Atarova in the book (co-edited with A.A. Gugnin) English Poetry in Translations of V.A. Zhukovsky [22 p335].

The translations of Burns done by the minor writers relate largely to the years of 1830–1840. In 1831 in The North Mercury and The Garland there appeared two translations by P. A. Dragomanov – “The Song (From Burns)” and “Farewell (From Burns)”. These are of only historical and cultural

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5 V.G. Belinsky mentioned Burns in some other articles. For example, in the article “The Division of Poetry into Genera and Species” (1841), he said the works of the Scottish author were among others that constitute “the richest treasures of lyric poetry” [17 p. 51]. In his review of the book The Tale of the Miller-the Sorcerer, about two Idgah and two Laborers by E. I. Alipanov, published in the third edition of 1843, Belinsky strongly condemned the tendency “to open and fondle the home-bred Russian talents”, to show E. I. Alipanov as a “future Burns”. He cited poems of this poet that got “into sacks of secondhand booksellers at the Macariev Fair, in the hands of village lackeys”, and concluded: “These are the verses that our home-bred Burns writes. These verses, wrapping paper, dirty edition and printing house of Sychev discover that “The Tale of the Miller-the Sorcerer” is winning fame among the aforesaid public ... What’s more?” [18 pp617-618].
interest because they are the first poetic works perceived by their creator explicitly as translations of Burns. These texts tend to use specific turns of speech used in Russian romantic poetry of the time; but the real Burns cannot be seen in these translations filled, as they are, with sugariness, enthusiasm, and undue pathos. These translations that have not been re-published since 1831 belong to the early, almost forgotten pages in the history of the Russian Burns.

Песня
(Из Борнса)
Вечор, когда в кругу друзей
Вино, шипя, лилось в стаканы,
Струились на груди моей
Златые пукли милой Анны.

……………………………
………………………………..

* 
Цари! вам запад и восток
От Инда даже до Саванны;
А мне оставьте уголок,
И в нем бесценный образ Анны.
Тогда любви святую власть,
От коей без ума султаны,
Восторги, пламенную страсть,
Я всё найду в объятиях Анны.

* 
Сокройся же светило дня,
И ты прочь, бледный лик Дианы,
Пусть звезды блещут для меня,
Когда я встречу взоры Анны! –
Приди, любви товарищ, ночь!
А ты, луч солнца, мною званный,
Свети яснее, чтоб точь-в-точь
Я мог списать всю прелесть Анны! [23, с. 246].

Прощание
(Из Борнса)
Прости, мой Ангел, скоро я
Оставлю край родной,
И моря дальняя струя
Запенится за мной!
О, пусть же бурное шумит
В безбрежности зыбей;
Нет, нет: оно не разлучит
С тобой души моей.
* * *
Прости, прости, в последний раз,
Кого я обожал!
«Простись навек!» – мне вещий глас
Таинственно сказал.
Но до минуты роковой,
Чем буду я смущен:
Твои то слезы, Ангел мой,
И твой прощальный стон! [24 с. 155–156].

In №43 of Literary Additions to “The Russian Invalid” there was published
the poem “Flower” as an “imitation of R. Burns”, the author of which was M.
A. Demidov, who was very much following Kozlov – the author of imitation
“To a Field Daisy …” than Burns himself, as Yu. D. Levin rightly identifies:

Цветок
(Подражание Р. Борнсу)

Цветочик прекрасный рос в поле,
Вдруг скошен – и нет его боле.
Как жаль мне тебя, о любезный цветок.
И мой час, быть может, как твой, не далек!
[25, c. 343].6

The translation of “To a Daisy, Which the Poet Cut with his Plow in 1786”
done by Z. was more professional. It appeared in Moskvityanin (“Moscovite”)
The translation reflected the deep affection and sincere sympathy towards
the unfortunate wild flower and the lyrical comparison of the fate of the
flower with that of a rural girl. Having kept the principal images, metrics and
rhythm of the original, the Russian translator nevertheless frequently replaced
specific epithets and metaphors of the Scottish poet with dull, commonplace
poeticisms. He also omitted and transformed the vivid artistic details (in
particular, “scanty mantle” became “rags” that ill-served the overall tonality of
Burns’s; “thy snawy bosom” and “thy unassuming head in humble guise” were
replaced with eyes fixed in “the blue distance”) [29 pp193–197]. It was M. P.
Pogodin who, directed by I. E.Masanov, appeared with this translation in 1829
in the Moscow Gazette under the pseudonym of “Z” meaning Zoilus [30 p381].

6 The translation with some discrepancies was republished by Yu. D. Levin in 1982 [26 p 541].
Later he became the publisher of *Moskvityanin*. Taking into account that in the 1820s Pogodin was actively engaged in literary translation (in particular he translated “The Death of Wallenstein” by Schiller, and “Götz von Berlichingen” by Goethe), we can assume that the translation “To a Daisy, Which the Poet Cut with his Plow in 1786” was created in 1829 under the influence of Kozlov’s efforts and the polemical response to this by Polevoy, even though published much later. However, browsing the archive of D. P. Oznobishin in the early 1990s in IRLI, Ms N. A. Khokhlova paid attention to a manuscript of a translation of “To a Daisy, Which the Poet Cut with his Plow in 1786” preserved in it (f. 213, №21, pp56–57) [31 p20]; then the translation was published in the edition of works of D. P. Oznobishin in the series *Literary Monuments* prepared by L. Golts, A. L. Grishunin and N. N. Holmukhamedova [32 pp365–366].

In the 1830s the articles about Burns began to appear in the Russian press: in №18 of the *Moscow Telegraph* (1834) there was published the first part of material translated from the *Dublin University Magazine* called “The Movement of Literature in England from the Beginning of the 19th Century”, where some pages were devoted to the review of creativity of the Scottish poet [33 pp81–83]; in the sixth volume of A. A. Plouchard’s *Encyclopedic Dictionary* (1836), the works of Burns were characterized as “abrupt glimmers of high spirit, which has been deprived of all that is necessary to achieve perfection”, but at the same time there was noted the depth of feeling in the songs, the moving sincerity of minor poems, “inspired with the memories of first love or romantic places of Homeland”; “The Cotter’s Saturday Night” and “Stanzas to a Mountain Daisy ...” translated by Kozlov were separately mentioned, the first of which was seen as “the most drastic example of the junction of the lofty with the simple-hearted”, the second – as a touching image of the poet’s own destiny [34 pp387–388]. The article “Robert Burns” (1837) [35 pp96–136], which goes back to the essay of Leon de Wailly, a French translator of Burns, is convincingly attributed to O. I. Senkovsky, a popular novelist, publicist and the editor of *Library for Reading*. It contains the rhythmical prose transcription of “John Barleycorn” in the spirit of the Russian epic tradition and even the name of this adaptation, “Ivan Yerofeich Bread-Grain”, places an accent upon Russian national character [35 pp133–135]. The eponymous protagonist of the translation, printed on the pages of *Library for Reading*, reminds of the typical epic hero, fighting with “infidels-busurmans”, (“the Kings of the Damned”). S. A. Orlov noticed the ‘permanent epithets not typical of the ballad structure (“damned heathen”, “sword curved and sharp”), epic endings (“Golovushka (little head), “sunny”), the intervention of the “evil witch”, “autumn, etc’ [2 p233].

This article also included some interlinear translations (mostly fragmented),

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7 The assumed attribution of the article to O.I. Senkovsky is work carried out by C. A. Orlov [2 p232].
8 For the republication of the attributed to Senkovsky adaptation see edition of 1982. [36 p449–451].
including the following translation of “Prayer”: [???In the prospect of death]

О Ты, Великое Существо! кто ты таково, это превосходит мои понятия; но я убежден, что известны тебе все твои создания здесь долу. – Стоит перед Тобою тварь твоя, вся растерзанная горем, вся израненная скорбью: и, конечно, все эти бедствия, которые убивают дух ее, повинуются твоему высокому велению. – Я верю, Всесильный, что Ты не действовал ни по жестокосердию, ни по внушениям гнева. О, уволь же мои измученные глаза от слез, или поскорей затми их смертью! – Но если я должен скорбеть для сообразности с Твоими мудрыми предначертаниями, то укрепи меня по крайней мере твердостью, чтобы я мог нести скорбь и не роптать! [35 c.131–132].

Finally, there is some evidence of the interest of Alexander Pushkin and M. Y. Lermontov in Burns. In the library of A. S. Pushkin there was a two-volume book The Poetical Works of Robert Burns (Chiswick, 1829), the first volume of which features pages cut by the owner up to 128th page where the celebrated “Stanzas to a Mountain Daisy ...” was printed [37 c. 180]. M. Y. Lermontov was fascinated by a quatrain “Had we never loved so kindly” from the song “Ae fond Kiss”; this quatrain Byron used as the epigraph to his poem “The Bride of Abydos”, where M. Y. Lermontov first encountered it. The translation was not quite exact, since, as noted by N. N. Bakhtin [40 pp149–151], the young poet had confused the English ‘kindly’ (gently) with the German ‘kind’ (child):

Если б мы не дети были,
Если б слепо не любили,
Не встречались, не прощались,
Мы с страданьям б не знались [41 c. 90].

P. M. Toper, referring to this translation by M. Y. Lermontov, which has become “the pearl” of Russian poetry, said: “It has long been known that some even gross blunders cannot be considered as a proof of a poor translation, as well as individually even the most beautiful discoveries cannot be an immutable feature of a good translation” [42]. We might wonder, what was the reason for Lermontov to incorrectly interpret the meaning of the word (intentionally or not); whether the translation has “improved” or “worsened” the impression of the original; can we consider this transformation into the Russian language as a translation [43 pp280–284] A fragment was not intended by Lermontov for printing and the first publication of it was in Notes of the Fatherland in 1859 [44 c62].

As you can see, in the early 19th century the works of Burns attracted

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9 About the different titles of the verse by R.Burns see the article of Yu.D.Levin [38 p57].
10 Interlink of R.Burns and G.Byron was in those years the subject of a translated article in «Notes of the Fatherland» [39 pp30–35].
the attention of the most significant Russian writers – Zhukovsky, Kozlov, Pushkin, Lermontov, and Polevoy. However, during these years the translations of the Scottish poet were also carried out by some minor writers, in particular, P. A. Dragomanov, M. A. Demidov. The focus of attention was concentrated on only a few texts but mostly on the poem “Stanzas to a Mountain Daisy...”, which is considered in Russia during this period to be the most typical of the heritage of the Scottish author.

References (English translation)


William Gilmore Simms and the Influence of Burns in the 19th Century American South
Steven Vanderlip

Over recent years, the influence of Robert Burns on nineteenth-century American readers and writers has been extensively studied, with especial recent interest in Burns’s influence on Walt Whitman. Less attention has been given, however, to the different aspects of Burns’s work that drew responses among different groups of American readers, especially among readers in different geographical sections of the United States. In the Burns Chronicle for 2016, J. C. DuRant contrasted the way Burns was viewed and quoted in two American newspapers in the 1850s, one from Richmond, Virginia, in the south, and the other from New Lisbon, Ohio, in the north. A fuller sense of such contrasts can be gleaned by examining how Burns’s poetry was known and used by another leading mid-nineteenth century American writer, the novelist, essayist and poet, William Gilmore Simms (1806-1870), from Charleston, South Carolina.

Simms had his greatest success as a novelist with historical romances about South Carolina’s history during colonial settlement, the conflicts between settlers and Native Americans, and the Revolutionary war, so that the influence of Walter Scott on Simms’s novels, as on other American writers, has long been recognized. By contrast, Burns’s presence in Simms’s work has been largely neglected. Robert Burns’s death and William Gilmore Simms’s birth are separated by a mere ten years, so Simms read both Burns and Scott as exciting recent new writers. Simms was certainly familiar with


Burns, with over twenty references dotted through his letters, poems, novels, and essays, and he wrote directly about Burns in his poem, “Heads of the Poets.”

Part of the attraction for Simms of both Burns and Scott was that they portrayed for an international readership a Scottish culture that was as evidently distinctive from that of England as Simms felt the American South was from New England. The relationship between Scottish and Southern cultural identities begins with immigration patterns and the disproportionately high number of Scots and Scots-Irish who migrated to the Carolinas. With immigration came a shared historical and political experience: both the Scots and American stories included hostilities with England. The antebellum South’s warm reception of Scottish literature is commonly credited to Scott’s historical romances. Scott’s influence has encouraged critics to see Simms as a romantic. Much has been made of the latter’s romantic histories of the American Revolution as drawing inspiration from the Waverley novels. As George Dekker has pointed out, historical romance has traditionally been linked to cultural nationalism, “a strong commitment to a particular ‘patria’ and its people,” and Simms was aiming, not at a non-partisan “gathering, collating, and assessing of evidence,” but at writing works of national literature. His novels have heroes and heroines and a dramatic sense guiding and selecting his narration of actual historical and political events. Even in his poetry, Simms recognized the romanticism of Scott, praising “Scott’s trumpet lay of chivalry and pride” as being “Homer in its rush.”

Later in the nineteenth-century, after the South’s defeat in the war of 1861-1865, Mark Twain famously criticized Scott for his “fantastic heroes and their grotesque ‘chivalry’ doings … romantic juvenilities … inflated language and other humbuggeries,” concluding that “The South has not yet recovered from the debilitating influence of his books.” One cannot help but see the spectre of William Gilmore Simms sitting as an unindicted coconspirator in Twain’s prosecution of Scott. Yet Simms also

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6 William Gilmore Simms, “Heads of the Poets, in his The Cassique of Accabee… with other Poems” (Charleston: John Russell, 1849), pp. 80-87 (p. 85). Unless otherwise noted, works of Simms cited in this essay are available through the Simms Initiatives, University of South Carolina, on the Web at: http://simms.library.sc.edu/index.php.
exhibits a realistic impulse, a thoroughgoing understanding of his region, in topography, history and the manners of his people. C. Hugh Holman countered Twain’s charges by arguing that, in Simms’s fiction, “It is in the dozens of minor characters realistically drawn from low life… that the Revolutionary Romances appear to us to have their greatest value both as literature⁸ and Holman’s defence of Simms as realist has been followed up by several more recent Southern critics.⁹

Viewed by comparison with the debate about Scott’s influence, there has been a virtual silence about Simms’s response to Burns. The relative paucity of Burns’s overt appearance in Simms’s work explains this silence, but Simms’s romanticism shares much with Robert Burns’s, with a shared focus on place and history. Though Burns’s life is mostly considered antecedent to the literary Romanticism that was the zeitgeist of Simms’s generation, it was Scotland, partially through Burns, who provided a paradigm for American literature by turning away from servile imitations of standard English literary models and turning instead to her own resources, producing a distinctive national literature (Hook, as in n. 1 above, p. 160). Simms famously wrote in his 1845 *Views and Reviews in American Literature* that the objective of the literati of his country should be, “to put Americanism in our letters.”¹⁰ Later in the same volume, in his essay “History for the Purposes of Art,” Simms noted commented that Robert Burns first voiced this Romantic nationalist ambition, recounting, in an echo of Burns’s own words, that his original impulse had been, “to make some song which would live for poor old Scotland’s sake” (*Views and Reviews*, p. 40).

With the widening divide and the advent of hostilities between the Northern and Southern states, Simms’s romanticism became increasingly *local*, expressing further the right, as Simms called it, of a people “to be themselves.”¹¹ Writing a decade after *Views and Reviews*, Simms asserts that “to be *national* in literature, one must needs be *sectional*!”¹² In conscious parallel to Burns’s Scottish voice within what seemed from an American perspective a federal, rather than unitary, United Kingdom, Simms wanted

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to develop a Southern consciousness within the framework of the United States. Discussing the idea of a “sectional” literature, Simms wrote:

There is nothing so sectional, so exclusive, as genius… What tributes have Burns and Scott drawn from the surrounding nation, with which to crown with verdure the bald, bleak hills of their own pretty domain! And how natural this should be so! We better prove our sympathies to the rest when we attach ourselves to one of its sections and expend our strength, our art, our affection upon that. Let the *Genius Loci* do thus always, and what region will remain without its tutelary god and crowning altars!13

Simms’s use of the term “*genius loci*” perhaps echoes Burns himself, in his poem, “The Vision,” where the Scottish muse commands the poet to “Know, the great Genius of this Land.”14 In his poetry, Simms often mentions specific place-names as Burns had done, though referring to Carolina’s Ashley River rather than Afton Water. Tellingly, a contemporary reviewer commented about Simms’s early poetry that “We cannot avoid seeing the images… of Burns… that have indeed passed through [Simms’s] mind.”15 Simms and Burns both see the artist’s purpose as engaging, fostering, and inspiring the spirit of a place and its history.

In describing the common life of the South, too, Simms makes quite explicit reference to Burns as his precursor. Writing in a short story about distinctively South Carolina food, Simms describes Carolina “black pudding” as being “something in the nature of the Scotch haggis so sublimely sung by Burns.”16 In an address in 1870, soon after the end of the war and emancipation, Simms cites Burns’s poem “Cotter’s Saturday Night” as modeling an “exquisite ideal” for the agrarian way of life, and the small independent farmer, in both Scotland and the South.17

Both poets consciously wrote to preserve and transmit a historical identity. Just as Burns could describe himself as the Patriot-Bard, so Simms, in Donald Davidson’s phrase, became the “saga man of his place, the keeper

of his people's story that held their history, culture, and identity."\(^{18}\) Indeed, the historical story mattered a great deal to both men: for Burns most strikingly in "Scots Wha Hae," and for Simms, in his early poem "Carolinians Who Inherit." The difference of language register is striking, but the Simms poem parallels Burns's invocation of Wallace and Bruce, by looking back to South Carolina's still-recent Revolutionary conflict with England and to a cavalcade of the state's revolutionary heroes, from Francis Marion, "the Swamp Fox" who fought a guerilla campaign against pro-British forces, to General William Moultrie, the defender of Charleston for whom Fort Moultrie is named, and Edward Rutledge, South Carolinian signer of the Declaration of Independence:

First among the brave to waken,
Proud resistance to the cause,
That with tyrant arm had shaken,
Equal rights and equal laws.\(^{19}\)

Beyond a focus on place and history, the influence of Burns seems most evident in Simms's portrayal of the common man of his country and their manners. If Mark Twain's criticism of Sir Walter Scott rests on caricaturing Scott's as an ungrounded romanticism, the same cannot be said of the Robert Burns who wrote "Is there for honest poverty." Burns and the young Simms of the 1820s and 1830s were both by standards of the time progressive in politics. Simms, of Scots-Irish ancestry, was like Burns of humble birth; his mother died when he was an infant, his father failed in business and left Carolina, and Simms, a virtual orphan, was brought up by his grandmother. Though over time Simms ascended the social ranks, identifying with the aristocratic planter class, defending slavery and bewailing the end of the old South, his writing also shows a continuing admiration for a different, simpler kind of Carolinian, the independent, egalitarian, upcountry, backwoodsmen characters, often Scots or Scots-Irish, that he portrays in many stories. The connection with Burns, and Simms's continuing belief that men are great not by birth but by personal character and deeds, is still present in Simms's late novel *Paddy McGann*, where the protagonist is told: "ef the clothes are shabby, what of that—You're a man, and… 'a man's a man for a' that!' The true man will always

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\(^{19}\) Simms, *Early Lays* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1827), pp. 80-81 (p. 81).
show through his clothing.”

Simms’s most substantial fictional response to Burns as national bard comes in one of his full-length historical romances, where the influence of Scott also looms large. In his first Revolutionary War novel *The Partisan*, first published in 1835, Simms created an alter ego, the fictional partisan-poet, George Dennison, and includes in his story a lengthy poem “by Dennison,” about Francis Marion and his guerrilla campaign in the South Carolina swamps, “stubborn to be free,” while “on his heels the foemen press.” Dennison describes Marion’s camp the night before an attack:

> Break up that hoecake, boys, and hand  
> The sly and silent jug that’s there;  
> I love not it should idle stand,  
> When Marion’s men have need of cheer.  
> ’Tis seldom that our luck affords  
> A stuff like this we just have quaffed,  
> And dry potatoes on our boards  
> May always call for such a draught.

In his later revision of the novel, Simms idealizes Dennison as bard or troubadour. Fated to be himself forgotten and unknown, Dennison sang “ballads, mostly extempore,” that “cheered the dull hours and the drowsy bivouac,” and “sang for the partisans the gallant feat even in the moment when performed, and taught to the hearts of a rude cavalry the lurking hope of remembrance in song when they themselves should never hear.”

Simms promises to preserve Dennison’s songs, “so that other ears shall hear them, who knew thee not” (*ibid*). When Simms wrote this novel, and even more when he revised it, he had become a successful modern professional writer, but the portrait of Dennison shows how much his ideal poet echoed the image of Burns, a patriot-bard who could “sing with the natural voice of a warm and passionate poet,” and “love with all the tender sweetness that lies in the heart of woman” (*ibid*), but “had a rough and native vigour, a talent all his own, and did not smooth his song to the loss of spirit, and did not shape his applauses to please the ears of the

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pretender” (*ibid.*, p. 240).23

Simms’s fullest tribute to Burns comes in his poem sequence, “Heads of the Poets” (1849), ranking Burns alongside Chaucer, Spenser Shakespeare, Milton and Scott:

> Thither at eve,
>  Where Burns still wanders with his violin song;
>  A melancholy conqueror, in whose sway
>  His own irregular soul grew dark and fell,
>  Incapable to spell, with resolute will,
>  The capricious genius that, o’er all beside,
>  Held perfect mastery. ’Twas here he went,
>  A man of pride and sorrows, weak yet strong,
>  With still a song discoursing to the heart,
>  The lowly human heart, of all its joys,
>  Buoyant and cheerful, yet with sadness too,
>  Such sadness as still shows us love through tears.24

Like most nineteenth-century American readers, north or south, Simms’s tribute shows the continuing negative effect of the Currie biography and its derivatives, and this may be one reason Simms’s links to Burns have long been neglected. But Simms’s poem remains a heartfelt tribute to a poet whom Simms acknowledged as a master of the human heart. Elsewhere, in a lecture about poetry given throughout the South in 1854, Simms writes about Burns less defensively, recommending his poetry to “young hearts” as being both “earnest and amorous.”25 The poetic tribute to Burns goes further, however, than the lecture: by emphasizing Burns as a poet, not only of pride and joy, but of sorrows and sadness, Simms perhaps understands and appreciates more of Burns than many other nineteenth-century critics. Simms had learned from Scott the power of historical fiction, and romantic nationalism, but it was in Burns’s poetry that he found inspiration to write of his native place in a grounded way, to remember the heroism of past generations, and to portray the common experiences of man with sincerity and authenticity.

23 Doreen Thierauf, “Simms’s Romantic Vision as Shown in His Critical Writing,” *Simms Review*, 17.1-2 (2009): 73-86 (p. 82), comments that Simms’s “Romantic longing for history, tradition, rootedness, and a fervent appreciation of the beauties of nature” was coupled with advocacy of a “down-to-earth poetic style” and “realistic honesty in description and sentiment” (p. 82).

24 Simms, “Heads of the Poets,” as in n. 6 above, pp. 84-85. Cf. also Parks, as in n. 9 above, p. 50.

William Marshall & Niel Gow

John A M Armit

On Friday 31st August, 1787, during his Highland Tour, Burns met Niel Gow at Dunkeld. It is possible that, a week later, when he visited Elgin and Fochabers on Friday 7th September, 1787, Burns may also have met another great Scottish fiddler of the time, William Marshall, a native of Fochabers. Whether they did meet or not, Burns wrote of Marshall that he was “the first [i.e. best] composer of strathspeys”.

It has been suggested to me that Marshall was the composer of Burns’ choice of tune to which “O my love is like a red, red rose” was set. It is true that a strathspey tune composed by Marshall, sometimes known as “Wishaw’s Favourite”, sometimes as “Mrs Hamilton of Wishaw”, was used in George Thomson’s *Select Collection of Original Scottish Airs*, but it was “Major Graham of Inchbrakie” which was the tune to be used – on Burns’s specific instructions – in James Johnson’s *Scots Musical Museum*. This tune was composed by Niel Gow.

It has also been suggested to me, however, that Niel Gow pinched this tune from William Marshall. Not so! The problem is that William Marshall wrote two tunes entitled “Mrs Hamilton of Wishaw,” one a reel and the other a strathspey. They are quite different. It is the strathspey tune which was used in George Thomson’s *Select Collection*. A careful comparison of the scores confirms this. Marshall’s strathspey bears no resemblance to “Major Graham of Inchbrakie”. There is absolutely no justification for the charge of piracy or plagiarism, at least so far as this particular tune is concerned. Not only is it quite different from Marshall’s strathspey, but it was published in Niel Gow’s collection of 1784, whereas Marshall’s didn’t appear until Marshall’s *Second Collection* in 1789!

However, let us now turn our attention to Marshall’s other “Mrs Hamilton of Wishaw”, the reel. Quite different from his strathspey of the same name, it appeared in Marshall’s *First Collection* in 1781. Niel Gow and his son Nathaniel included this reel in their *Third Collection* published in 1792 and failed to attribute it to Marshall, which was rather naughty. I hope that this resolves the confusion.

Nowadays of course, it is neither Marshall’s strathspey nor Gow’s to which the song is most often sung. Today’s preferred tune, known as “Low down in the broom”, was perhaps originally composed by John Wedderburn in the 16th century. It became popular when it was included in Robert Archibald Smith’s collection of songs *The Scottish Minstrel* published in 1821. R A Smith, as well as being precentor at Paisley Abbey and later
at St George’s, Edinburgh, was the composer of hymn and psalm tunes, the most famous being “Invocation”. Along with the Paisley poet Robert Tannahill he was, in 1805, a founder member of the Paisley Burns Club.
Translations of Robert Burns
Bill Dawson

Over the 2016 Burns season I twice heard references to Burns’s works being translated, one speaker declaring that Burns had been translated “into over two dozen languages”, the second “into many languages, except English”. These remarks struck chords with me as I have had a passing interest in translations of Burns for a number of years, seeing these as an indicator of how his popularity has spread around the world. It is a significant understatement to give “over two dozen languages” and Burns has in fact been translated into standard English on several occasions.

The earliest translation of Burns was during his lifetime. In 1794 James Grahame, a lawyer in Edinburgh, published *Poems in English, Scotch and Latin* including Burns’s *To a Mouse* in Latin. Other translations during Burns’s life were “Green grow the rashes”, 1795, and “Lines on Stirling”, 1796, both into German.

The first significant attempt to show Burns spread across other languages was William Jacks’ book “Robert Burns in Other Tongues” produced to coincide with the centenary of 1896. He listed 18 languages, African Dutch (Afrikaans), Bohemian or Czech, Danish, Dutch, Frisian, French, Scottish and Irish Gaelic, German, Hungarian, Italian, Norwegian, Russian, Swedish, Swiss German, Welsh and Latin. He examined poems from each language and commented critically on how successful the translations were. He used several poems in each language and where there were multiple known translations he selected several authors for his assessments. Had he the advantages of online search engines he may also have listed several other languages which had translations published by that time including Bulgarian, English, Finnish, Japanese, Latvian, Polish, Romanian, Serbo-Croatian, Slovenian and Ukrainian. As an accomplished linguist, perhaps he chose not to enter languages of which he did not have command and upon which he therefore could not adequately comment.

Translations have been the subject of a number of *Burns Chronicle* articles over the years. Most of these deal with translation into a specific language but several have tried to give a broad picture as this piece attempts. In 1956 George C Emslie opened his article “Burns in Other Languages” with a “number of at least twenty-two” and ended with a catalogue of translations garnered by trawling through the main Burns collections known at that time. The 1960 *Chronicle* recorded a bi-centenary “Exhibition of Burns Translations” in Australia with a total of twenty six exhibited but reported a further eight that had arrived too late to be shown and knowledge of a
Burns Chronicle 2017

Further three that could not be traced. It would appear that these authors focussed on books of translations and did not allow for periodicals or other incidental publications. In the Chronicle’s most significant article on translated Burns, Jane Burgoyne selected parts of Auguste Angelier’s 1893 opus Robert Burns. La Vie, Les Ouvres (the Life, the Works) translating these into English for a serialised article in the Burns Chronicle 1969 -1977. Professor G Ross Roy’s first appearance in the Chronicle was a reprint of his Revue de Literature Comparee article Bibliographie Analytique serialised as “French Translations of Robert Burns (to 1893)” in 1965 and 1966 Chronicles.

Burns’s writings in English has been suggested since earliest publication of his works, Henry McKenzie, in his famous review in the ‘Lounger’ of 9th December 1786, remarks critically on Burns use of Scots dialect, and commenting on the Kilmarnock edition in the “Monthly Review” of December 1786, James Anderson notes that the poems “are written in some measure in an unknown tongue, which must deprive most of our Readers of the pleasure they would otherwise naturally create” and “render it less disgusting to our Readers south of the Tweed”, It should be noted that the Bard himself felt it necessary to provide a glossary of Lallans terms in the Kilmarnock. Two years later, Dr John Moore advised Burns that his future works should “abandon the Scottish stanza and dialect”. In “Should Burns be Translated” in Chambers’ Journal of 1946, reprinted in the 1947 Burns Chronicle, Elizabeth Ewing echoed the continuing controversy of the need to present Burns in standard English, suggesting that even Scots then struggled to fathom the perceived language difficulty. Although Burns wrote many poems in English, as demonstrated by Eileen Bremner’s book, “The English Poetry of Robert Burns” giving a selection of poems, there have been several distinct translations of his Scots dialect oeuvre into standard English. A handful of books give selections, the earliest in 1892, and the latest in 1990, A number of favourite poems have been frequently thus transformed and Tam o’ Shanter was further ‘Americanised’ in 1994 by David K Kosak.

In the beginning it was, in the main, translations of single poems that were published, and then very early, selections were published in magazines and newspapers. Later, books of collections were assembled. Substantial portions of Burns works have been widely translated – and not only those which win favour in Scotland. Many works outside those most popular at home have been translated, for instance “Address to the Shade of Thomson” was the first translation into Russian in 1800 and “Blythe Hae I Been on Yon Hill” was the first translation into Serbo-Croat in 1869. The first selections from Burns’s correspondence were translated in 1858 although the famous ‘autobiographical’ letter to Dr John Moore had been included
with translated songs and poems from 1800.

At the time of writing, Burns has been translated into well over 60 languages (listed below), German leads numerically, with his popularity in Russia reflected in many publications. There are also translations into more than half a dozen languages of peoples assimilated into the greater Russian Federation. Among numerous translations into French are works in francophone dialects such as the patois of both Guernsey and Jersey. Scotland also enjoys translations into minority divisions of the Scots language: Ayrshire dialect or Lallans; the Doric of north-eastern Scotland and both Scots and Irish Gaelic. The latter are the smallest minority languages in the entire range. Esperanto enthusiasts have translated a substantial number of poems.

The following list gives languages into which Burns has been translated; as my predecessors in *Chronicle* articles, I prefix the disclaimer that it should not be regarded as definitive as it is gleaned from a number of sources without much deep research. Every resource to which I turn seems to produce yet another translation, indicating the width of worldwide Burns interest. The dates mark the earliest translations I have found so far. This is a fascinating subject, deserving of in-depth research and more detailed study.

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The Jean Armour Burns Houses: A Brief History  
Angus MacKenzie

The Jean Armour Burns Houses in Mauchline date back to 1915 and the far-sighted actions of the Glasgow businessman and lifelong Burnsian, Charles Rennie Cowie. His purchase of the dilapidated former home of Robert Burns and Jean Armour on behalf of the Glasgow and District Burns Association, together with other buildings of historical interest in the centre of the village, helped to preserve these significant buildings for future generations. Moreover, Cowie’s intervention marked the founding of a philanthropic enterprise which continues to this day. Having restored and renovated the buildings in Mauchline, the Association founded a scheme to offer accommodation and support for older women who might otherwise struggle in later life. With their rent and fuel costs borne by the Association, occupants were able to live in comfort and dignity. In the 1950s, with the old buildings visibly deteriorating, the Association drew up ambitious plans for a purpose-built development of ten houses on land at Mossgiel Farm on the edge of Mauchline. It is the story of these Houses - and the individuals who gave up their time to maintain them - that is described here.

The modern, well-equipped houses at Mossgiel Farm, officially opened in 1959, represented the culmination of almost a decade of fundraising activities by the Association and the wider Burns community and marked a significant improvement in living conditions for the existing tenants. The initial fundraising - and the subsequent decades of upkeep and improvement – relied heavily upon the efforts of a small number of dedicated Association office-holders, many of whom gave up a considerable proportion of their free time to ensure the smooth running of the Houses. A close bond developed between Association members and the occupants, and these links were strengthened by the fact that potential new tenants were recommended by members of the constituent clubs. Improvement works were undertaken in the late 1970s, but the need to enhance the properties further in the 1980s and beyond placed the Association under strain at a time when membership was in decline. Over time, the cost and complexity of providing what was, in effect, social housing, grew increasingly onerous, and in 2012 ownership of the Houses transferred to East Ayrshire Council. Yet the Association has remained committed to the Houses, and continues, through the Jean Armour Burns Trust, to offer assistance and support.

C.R. Cowie’s purchase of the Burns House held special meaning for Burns aficionados as the place where the poet and Jean Armour began
married life together in 1788. The Burns Chronicle confirmed that ‘anything that was considered needful to restore it to its old simplicity has been done’, but it also confirmed that the House would provide accommodation for several aged and infirm women, something which was ‘thoroughly in accord with the spirit of the national bard’. Cowie also funded the purchase and restoration of Dr McKenzie’s House and ‘Auld Nanse Tinnock’s’ and both properties were gifted to the Association. Cowie was a member of Partick Burns Club, a life-long Liberal and a stalwart of the temperance movement, and had spent the early stages of his working life in Burma before returning to Glasgow to join the family business, Cowie Brothers. He was an antiquarian and active member of the United Free Church and at the official opening of Nanse Tinnock’s Tavern in 1924 - almost two years after his death – it was suggested that Cowie’s interventions demonstrated ‘philanthropy without a shade of patronage or condescension’.3

An endowment fund ensured the long-term provision for the elderly residents and this was supplemented by funds from the constituent clubs of the Glasgow and District Burns Association and Burns clubs throughout the world. As a result, the Houses remained on a sound financial footing, yet by the late 1940s, the properties were beginning to show their age. They were by now the oldest inhabited houses in Mauchline, and it was felt that the commitment to the tenants demanded an entirely new development. The decision to build new houses galvanised the Burns movement. The likely date of completion, 1959, was also the bicentenary of the birth of Robert Burns, and the Association suggested that the new Jean Armour Burns Houses would be a worthy memorial. The Association was confident that any appeal would build on the support which was already forthcoming from the global diaspora of Burns clubs and associations. After inspecting a number of possible sites, a two acre plot of land between the National Memorial Homes and Mossgiel Farm was felt to be particularly appropriate. Tom Beet, President of the Association made the first public appeal for donations at the 1951 Burns Federation Conference in Montrose, asking his audience, ‘could any scheme appeal more to the hearts of Burnsians?’

The Association was conscious of the magnitude of the task. Letters were sent out early in 1952 soliciting donations, and again the Association made an emotional appeal for individuals to do ‘something in the spirit

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1 Burns Chronicle, 1916.
2 Glasgow Herald, 25 November 1922.
3 Burns Chronicle, 1926, p96.
4 Burns Chronicle, 1952.
of Burns.\textsuperscript{5} By late 1953 the total sum raised had reached £3,473, and the appeal received a significant contribution a year later with the receipt of £5,000 from the estate of William Baxter.\textsuperscript{6} It was agreed that the new properties should be equipped to the highest possible specification, and the earliest proposals included ‘a living room, bed annexe and built-in wardrobe, bathroom and kitchenette with larder and coal cupboard’.\textsuperscript{7} A common room formed a key part of the plans, and although this was primarily a social area to foster a sense of companionship, it was intended that it might also double as a clinic in the event of sickness.

Neil Campbell, the Association Treasurer, played a central role in marshalling the Association’s resources. The Endowment Fund had been carefully husbanded since 1915 and in October 1951 it stood at £37,822 4s 10d, giving the Association some leeway in the event that funds did not materialise as evenly as they hoped.\textsuperscript{8} In just a few years, the costs had multiplied, and the original estimate of £8,400 for the ten houses and common room had grown to £14,270 by 1954 – and would grow further to over £16,000 by 1956.\textsuperscript{9} The final design was a ‘V’ shape with five houses on each side of the central common room, all linked by a covered veranda. Work started in the summer of 1956 and a formal ceremony on 29\textsuperscript{th} September marked the laying of the foundation stone. In tapping the stone into place, Allan Meikle, then President of the Association, used a mallet which had been made using wood from the rafters of Nanse Tinnock’s House.\textsuperscript{10}

The Association was acutely aware of the publicity value of a successful opening and was keen to make the connection with the bicentenary celebrations. In 1956, an approach had been made to Buckingham Palace to enquire about the availability of H.M. Queen Mother, and while this was unsuccessful, by the summer of 1959 it had been agreed that the Lady Provost of Glasgow would be a suitable alternative, given that the houses were essentially a ‘Glasgow’ venture.\textsuperscript{11} Proceedings on the day were led by the Association President Samuel Love, and the guests moved on from the ceremony at Mossgiel to a garden party at Montgomery House, Tarbolton, and then, in the evening, to a Burns Pageant in Ayr. Mrs Myer Galpern, the

\textsuperscript{5} G&DBA, Appeal Letter, January 1952.
\textsuperscript{6} Glasgow Herald, 2 November 1953; G&DBA, Monthly Meeting, September 1954.
\textsuperscript{7} G&DBA, Monthly Meeting, February 1951.
\textsuperscript{8} G&DBA, Monthly Meeting, October 1951.
\textsuperscript{9} G&DBA, Monthly Meeting, January 1955; Glasgow Herald, 1 October 1956.
\textsuperscript{10} Glasgow Herald, 1 October 1956.
\textsuperscript{11} G&DBA, Monthly Meeting August 1956.
Lady Provost, spoke of the ‘warm generosity and kindly human spirit’ which underpinned the project, quoting Burns when she stated that ‘affliction’s sons are brothers in distress’. For the Association and the constituent clubs, it was a proud day, reflecting the fact that over £15,000 had been raised in under a decade.

The Association and the wider Burns movement had every right to celebrate their achievement. The construction of the new houses was a stunning memorial to Burns in the bi-centenary year. Yet what emerges most from records of the period is the compassion of those who were most closely involved with the development of the houses, and there are many examples of individuals travelling down from Glasgow to visit residents who became ill or less mobile. A key tenet of the Burns Houses was the belief that if any of the ladies had to leave their house for reasons of ill health, their house would be kept open for them, with no question of it being re-let. In a few cases, the tenants were too ill to return, and in these cases members of the Association were diligent in maintaining contact.

Until comparatively recently, new residents were recommended by one of the Glasgow Burns Clubs, the criteria suggesting that the potential resident should be of modest means, and therefore likely to benefit from the rent-free accommodation. As membership numbers dropped, this became a less effective method of recruiting new tenants, but in the period after 1959 there were more potential residents than available places. More recently, it was decided to allow men to apply for places and tenancies were offered to people in the local community, a seemingly radical departure which in reality did little to alter the ethos of the Houses.

Regular appeals and fundraising organised by individual Burns Clubs helped support the upkeep of the Houses. The costs were not insignificant, and in 1969, annual upkeep of the properties was £1,000. This figure included rates, services and maintenance, but it did not include the innumerable acts of additional assistance which improved the ladies’ quality of life. A piano was donated before the official opening in 1959 and a television soon followed. A small pension was offered, and every Christmas, in addition to the traditional meal, each resident was given a Christmas Box. In addition, every summer the Association would charter a bus and take the residents for an afternoon outing and high tea. Together with the regular visits by individual Burns Clubs - many of which would involve singing and recitals – and the company of one another, the

residents were able to live in companionable comfort.

The successful completion of the Jean Armour Burns Houses was testament to the hard work of a few key figures within the Burns movement and their ability to mobilise a much wider group of supporters. The final decades of the twentieth century were a much tougher proposition, and rising costs and an increasing administrative burden placed the Association under new pressure. The office-holders of the Glasgow and District Burns Association - a number of whom held office for several decades – were aware of the responsibility of their positions, and they always carried out their tasks with one eye on the future viability of the Houses. In recognition of their part in securing completion of the houses, it was decided in January 1959 that individual houses should be named to commemorate the most significant contributions. Two of the most important individuals were Neil Campbell and Andrew Stenhouse. Both men were instrumental in developing the plans for Mossgiel, and it was their administrative nous which helped move the scheme to fruition and then ensured that funds were in place in the decades that followed. Gradually, all of the new Houses received plaques. These reflected some of the most significant contributions over the period from 1959 until the refurbishment scheme in 1980, and acknowledged the particular endeavours of notable Association members or constituent clubs. Names were applied to the ten Houses, the Common Room and the Caretakers House (built in 1980):

1. The Glasgow Haggis Club Centenary House;
2. James T. Picken;
3. Andrew Stenhouse;
4. W. G. McAulay;
5. Robert Robb;
6. J. Kevin McDowall;
7. A. Neil Campbell;
8. William Black;
9. Samuel Black;
10. The Royalty Burns Club;
11. R. Dickson Johnston

Neil Campbell was a formidable figure in the Burns movement. He joined the Executive Committee of the Glasgow and District Burns Association in 1929 and served as Honorary Treasurer from 1932 until his retirement in 1977.13 Campbell was a member of the Ninety Club in Edinburgh and

Bridgeton Burns Club in Glasgow and played a major part in the running of the Burns Federation, serving as President in the bicentenary year. His careful stewardship of the Endowment Fund provided security throughout the period. Described as a ‘tough wee man’, Neil Campbell was assiduous in overseeing the management of the appeal fund in the 1950s and after the homes were occupied, he ensured that the Association maintained the financial resources to cover the day to day running costs and the inevitable repairs. Perhaps Campbell’s most far-sighted action was the provision he made for future upgrades. Noting ‘the careful management of investment income from the endowment fund and generous donations received from individuals’, his obituary in the Burns Chronicle in 1979 celebrated the fact that ‘it is typical that, quietly over the years, he has been nurturing the Building Fund, and the Association is now ready to improve the houses up to modern standards and erect a caretaker’s house’.\(^\text{14}\) Campbell was central to the efforts to build the new houses in 1959, but it was his astute financial management which guaranteed the long-term health of the Houses.

Andrew Stenhouse was also honoured with a plaque in 1959. Stenhouse was another long-serving member of the Association, serving as Honorary Secretary from 1935 until his death in 1975. From 1946 until his death, Stenhouse also served as Assistant Secretary of the Burns Federation and he was President in 1960-61. Born in Maryhill in 1909, Stenhouse had studied at Glasgow University before launching a successful career in law.\(^\text{15}\) Despite the pressure of his career, he was devoted to the Association and the Jean Armour Burns Houses. Working in tandem with Neil Campbell, Stenhouse played a fundamental part in placing the houses on a sound financial footing, building the alliances between the Association, its constituent clubs and the clubs and associations in Scotland and beyond. This global diaspora is evident in another of the names linked to the houses, James T. Picken, President of the Victorian Scottish Union Club in Melbourne. Picken was a noted Burnsian who travelled to the UK on several occasions to attend Burns Federation conferences and the erection of a plaque followed his death - in Bombay, en route to Melbourne - shortly after attending the 1962 Burns Federation Conference.

J. Kevan McDowall was possibly the best known name outwith Burns circles. McDowall was an Ayrshire man who went on to become a respected Glasgow lawyer and was a past President of the Ayrshire Association of

\(^{14}\) Ibid.

\(^{15}\) Burns Chronicle, 1975.
Burns Clubs and of the Mauchline Burns Club.\textsuperscript{16} In 1952-53, he served as President of the Burns Federation and he was proud to be the Secretary of the Scottish Burns Club - formed by his father - which was still run on temperance lines.\textsuperscript{17} McDowall gained a degree of notoriety in the 1930s when he led a rebellion amongst a section of the membership of Cathcart Unionist Association over Home Rule, and he was an active supporter of Nationalist politics for the remainder of his life.\textsuperscript{18} A ‘kenspeckle figure’ whose interests included Scottish history, antiquities and music halls, the \textit{Burns Chronicle} stated that ‘Scotland had suffered a great loss’ with his death.\textsuperscript{19} It was said that at the age of 67, he had simply ‘burnt himself out for all that was good for Scotland and Scots’.

Walter G. McAuley was less well-known outside the extended Burns family. A former Honorary President of Glasgow and District Burns Association, McAuley was closely involved with the Jean Armour Burns Houses and was a notable financial donor. McAuley died in 1952 and it would appear likely that the plaque reflects a bequest that was made as part of his estate. The plaque for Robert Robb recognises a considerable legacy that was left to the Association during the period in the mid-1950s when fundraising for the new houses was at its peak. Robb died in 1954 and left £2,000 to the appeal.\textsuperscript{20} A member of the Glasgow Haggis Club for many years, Robb was President of the Glasgow and District Burns Association at the time of his death. The plaque for William Black recognised a Dumfriesshire man who was Secretary of the Southern Scottish Counties Burns Association and a well-kent figure amongst Burnsians from the 1930s until his death in 1959. At the time of Black’s death, Jim Picken described ‘Willie’ as a ‘student of Burns, a lover of Burns and a much respected and much loved gentleman.’\textsuperscript{21} Two plaques celebrated the contributions made by constituent clubs, the Glasgow Haggis Club and the Royalty Burns Club. These plaques reflected sustained and generous donations to the Jean Armour Burns Houses, but they also acknowledged the interest taken in the enterprise by club members, as demonstrated by numerous visits and additional gifts.

The completion of the Houses in 1959 was not the end of the story. The 1970s presented new challenges. Despite a steady income from donations and bequests, the running costs at Mossgiel began to spiral. In 1974, Neil

\begin{thebibliography}{21}
\bibitem{16} Kilmarnock Standard, 6 September 1958.
\bibitem{17} Burns Chronicle, 1953.
\bibitem{18} R.J. Finlay, \textit{Independent and Free} (Edinburgh, 1993).
\bibitem{19} Burns Chronicle, 1958.
\bibitem{20} G&DBA, Monthly Meeting
\bibitem{21} Burns Chronicle, 1959.
\end{thebibliography}
Campbell warned that expenditure threatened to exceed income. Yet small improvements continued to be implemented. A colour television arrived in 1970, donated by the Burns Club of Cuyahoga, Ohio, and new storage heaters improved the comfort of the common room which was being underused due to cold and draughts.\(^{22}\) Despite the effects of inflation and various strikes, and the loss of a number of respected Association members, the latter part of the 1970s marked an important turning point for the houses.\(^{23}\) The homes of 1959 had been eclipsed by subsequent housing improvements, and it was clear that expectations at the cusp of the 1980s were far higher than in the past. In 1975 the Association was able to begin planning an upgrade.\(^{24}\) This was testimony to Neil Campbell’s financial acumen, but also reflected the significant contributions of the next generation of office-holders. During this period two names stand out. W. Page Burgess and R. Dickson Johnston both served as Housing Convenor during the period, spending a considerable amount of time and energy on plans for the future of the houses while ensuring that day to day conditions at the properties remained acceptable. The common room was named after W. Page Burgess in recognition of his work looking after the ladies and his long service with the Association. By 1977 they had settled on a series of improvements which would provide central heating, double glazing, full redecoration and the installation of modern fixtures and fittings in the bathroom and kitchens. The most striking addition was to be the erection of an eleventh, slightly larger, house, to be used by an on-site caretaker.

Three hundred Burnsians gathered at Mossgiel Farm on 20 September 1981 to celebrate the completion of the refurbishment. As with the original development in 1959, the constituent clubs of the Association had played a vital role in providing the financial wherewithal, but the work was aided by a large bequest from the estate of Robert Patterson. Fittingly, a new plaque was unveiled on the day. The new caretaker’s house was named after R. Dickson Johnston, a reflection of his unstinting work over many years at Mauchline and recognition of his key role in overseeing the rebuilding of the houses.

The history of the houses since 1981 reflects the difficulty of a voluntary body providing social housing in an increasingly complex regulatory environment. Since its inception, the running costs of the Jean Armour Burns Houses depended upon the steady income from Burns clubs and

\(^{22}\) G&DBA, AGM 1970.
\(^{24}\) G&DBA, Executive Meeting February 1975.
associations. As club membership declined, a number of long-established clubs withered and died. The decline reflected societal changes, but it presented a clear threat to the long-term viability of the Jean Armour Burns Houses. Paradoxically, this occurred despite increasing interest in the life and work of Robert Burns. Nevertheless, the reduction in membership figures had a direct impact on the sums being donated and by the 1990s, it was clear that the future of the houses was unsustainable without significant change.

The first indication of a new approach was the transfer of the Houses to a new Company - Jean Armour Houses Ltd - in 1994. This was managed by a Board of Directors, all members of the Glasgow and District Burns Association. Again, it was apparent that significant and potentially expensive remedial work was necessary at Mossgiel. The Company and the Association needed to be able to guarantee the quality of life of the occupants in future years, and falling revenues placed this in doubt. With running costs exceeding income, 2004 proved to be a pivotal year. Following further refurbishment, the new company began to levy a small monthly rent. With housing benefit coming into the equation, the Company effectively became a social housing provider on behalf of East Ayrshire Council, a change which stabilised the finances, but radically altered the original premise of the Houses. The Directors of the Company were conscious of the fact that they had never intended to become part of a social housing enterprise, and in 2011 it was decided to seek another, better qualified, body to take responsibility for the Houses.

In 2012 the houses were sold to East Ayrshire Council, who pledged to build a further ten homes on the site. The houses will still be known as the Jean Armour Burns Houses and the plaques which form an essential part of the history of the Mossgiel site have been retained. In negotiating the transfer, it was agreed that accommodation should continue to be provided for the aged or the disadvantaged, preserving the legacy of the Houses. Following the sale of the Houses, Jean Armour Burns Houses Ltd, was wound up with the assets transferred to a new body, the Jean Armour Burns Trust. The Directors of the old company became the Trustees: Robert Stevenson, Jim Slater, George Anderson, David Sibbald, Ian Macpherson and Tom Myles. The invested income from the sale has generated funds which are available to groups and individuals for projects or events which promote the work of Robert Burns in the community or in schools. This continued engagement brings the legacy of C.R. Cowie full circle and ensures that a notable venture – imbued with the spirit of Burns – carries on into the twenty-first century.
First Shaw Scholar at the University of Glasgow
Prof. Gerard Carruthers

Sponsored by the kind generosity of Frank and Susan Shaw and family, the Centre for Robert Burns Studies has been home to the first ‘Shaw Scholar’ during 2015-16. The recipient of this postgraduate package is Mr Jo DuRant (formerly an undergraduate at the University of South Carolina in Columbia, USA). Jo is working on an MPhil thesis, by research, the subject of which is the life and writings of Robert Burns's friend, Maria Riddell (1772-1808). Among Maria Riddell’s publications, ripe for scholarly reassessment, are *Voyage to the Madeira and Leeward and Caribbean Isles, with Sketches of the Natural History of these Islands* (1792) and work in an edited volume, *The Metrical Miscellany, consisting chiefly of poems hitherto unpublished* (1802). Jo is also working with a number of unpublished letters and a commonplace book by Maria.

Frank Shaw is himself known to many Burnsians of course as an active member of the Burns Club of Atlanta and for his excellent website, ‘Robert Burns Lives’ www.electricscotland.com/familytree/frank/burns.

Contributions to the Burns Chronicle

Articles for inclusion in the Burns Chronicle should be emailed to chronicle@rbwf.org.uk in a word document or similar. Illustrations should be included separately from the text document as jpeg or similar. Deadline for the next, 2018, edition is June 30th 2017 and all articles should be submitted by that date. Earlier submissions at anytime will be most appreciated by the Editor. An acknowledgement of receipt of an article from the Editor should not be taken as a signal that the article will be included in the Chronicle. The Editor cannot give any prior undertaking that anything submitted will be included. Articles may be referred to other advisors for qualified opinion, and may be edited for publication.
Burns in the Auction Rooms

Monody on Maria

A one-page manuscript containing three verses of “Monody on Maria” was offered at Bonhams New York on 9th December 2015, selling for, including the premium, US$ 10,625.

The verses:

“How cold is that breast now which Folly once fired,
How pale is that cheek where the rouge lately glistened
How mute is that tongue which the echoes oft tired
How dull is that ear which to flatt’ry so listened—

Loves, Graces & Virtues, I call not on you;
So shy, grave & distant; ye shed not a tear:
But come, all ye offspring of Folly so true,
And flowers let us cull for Maria’s cold bier.—
We’ll search through the garden for each silly flower,
We’ll search through the forest for each idle weed;
But chiefly the nettle so typical shower,
For none ere approached her but rued the rash deed”

are stanzas 1, 3 and 4 of the six including epitaph published by Kinsley (no 443) however he does not note this manuscript in his volume but his commentary opinions that the second and following verses were added after mid-March, drawing his published text from the letter to Clarinda of 25th June, collating with the letter to Mrs. Dunlop of around 13th March 1794. These manuscript verses vary from Kinsley’s published text having “breast” for “bosom” in line 1, “mute” for “silent” in line 3, “search” again in line 10 where Kinsley has “range”.

The new ownership is unknown and any information will be appreciated by the Editor.

Editions

Select editions of Burns can command heavy prices at auction, at Lyon & Turnbull, Edinburgh, 4th May 2016 an Edinburgh, skinking’, edition, nicely bound by Stikeman in Black morocco with gilt decorations was catalogued with an estimate £1000 – 1500, This bidding however barely got into the estimate bracket when the hammer fell. Copies of Burns Works associated with famous people can fare well at auction as they tend to be sought after by both Burns collectors and followers of the other famous person. Sotheby’s, New York, on December 14th 2015 offered an otherwise unremarkable 8 volume set of Burns Works, edited by Alexander Smith 1879. What raised the interest here was the provenance. These were from the library of Walt Whitman, with his annotations, having been gifted to him by Andrew Carnegie. On the day the lot marginally exceeded the estimate, the hammer falling at $75,000.
Editorial; Towards a new edition of The Complete Works

With the pending publication over the next few years of the new Oxford Edition of the Works of Robert Burns, thoughts in the Federation have turned to the need for a new one-volume popular edition of Burns based on the fresh scholarship brought to the re-editing of the works for the 21st Century. The pending multi volume OUP edition will no doubt alter our received canon of the works but these will be substantial and costly volumes and the idea has been raised at the Board of possible production of an economic and convenient single volume taking on board the latest scholarship. Initially the Board have reacted favourably to the idea of publishing a definitive complete works in the moderate future and are examining the implications, not least financially, to move this project positively.

The established canon has constantly evolved since the first posthumous publication of the works of Robert Burns in 1800. Almost every new Editor who has followed has introduced new verses; a phrase such as “published here for the first time” was seen as a necessary marketing tool to promote a new edition in the burgeoning market of Victorian enthusiasm for Robert Burns. Efforts to align the canon were attempted and to some extent achieved with scholarly editions edited by William Wallace, Scott-Douglas and the four-volume centenary edition of W Henley and TF Henderson becoming regarded as the best available texts for a generation. Discoveries of supposed “new” Burns material did not altogether tail off in the 20th Century, infamously the very popular Collins edition, edited by James Barke, bravely boasted “60 poems appearing for the first time” and also included some questionable lines and spurious stanzas without reference to manuscript sources. More recently, another Scottish publishing house has issued an edition with some academic credentials which included several “recently attributed” poems which have since been shown to be bogus.

In the midst of all this, Professor James Kinsley for the Oxford University Press produced in 1968 a three volume work, two of poems/songs - one of commentary, which is regarded as the definitive scholarly study of the works and universal reference. It is now about to be overtaken by the new Oxford University Press volumes currently being assembled by the team at the Centre for Robert Burns Studies at Glasgow University. The texts of the Poems on the Federation website are generally in line with Kinsley’s edition; your Editor refers constantly to this to check quotations etc for inclusion in the Burns Chronicle.
When the Burns Federation marked the 200th Anniversary of the Kilmarnock Edition with the publication of a fresh complete volume of Burns Works, editor James Mackay came under severe criticism for a number of faults and variants in the texts as printed. He ascribed most faults to printer’s errors and flaws in the composition of the pages for the process and many of the Membership at large did not appreciate the number of varying MSS extant, but the edition was a flagship for the Federation of the day and it was seen to be flawed. The criticism of Jim Mackay ran deep, the companion ‘The Complete Letters of Robert Burns’ published a year later lacked popular support and this did not diminish the hardened line. Support further declined for the proposed companion ‘Burns A-Z, The Complete Word-finder’ which Mackay then personally took forward and published independent of the Federation albeit in a similar style and binding. Further issues and criticism led to the estrangement of Jim Mackay and the Federation after the 1991 Burns Chronicle. Jim Mackay revisited the Complete Works project and, with the publishers, issued an updated edition in 1993, eliminating the errors, re-examining the text sources and expanding and rewriting many of the notes. This edition, supported by the Federations ‘Letters’ and by Mackay’s own ‘Burns A–Z’ forming the best available single volume reference editions for Burns enthusiasts.

The Robert Burns World Federation is the leading source of authoritative information on the life and works of Robert Burns. In reflection of that position it is now time for the Federation to again produce a single volume containing all of Robert Burns known works, using the best texts, with the guidance offered in the scholarly OUP edition. It is essential that this single volume edition is properly edited to ensure this accuracy, that the printing process is carefully overseen to prevent the errors which plagued the 1986 volume and the book published at a reasonable cover price to ensure widespread distribution of a RBWF edition which can be confidently referred to for the accurate presentation of the texts.
Robert Burns MOOC
Massive Open Online Course

A new online course on Robert Burns has proved to be a great success. Launched in January on the poet’s birthday, the course ‘Robert Burns: Poems, Songs and Legacy’ attracted 7,553 learners to sign up.

This course was the first ‘Massive Open Online Course’, or MOOC for short, on the bard. Launched by the University of Glasgow, home of the Centre for Robert Burns Studies, on Futurelearn, a popular platform for online learning, it is taught by staff in Scottish Literature, and calls upon the expertise of Professor Gerard Carruthers, director of the Centre, Dr Pauline Mackay, lecturer in Robert Burns Studies, Dr Ronnie Young, and Dr Catriona MacDonald of Scottish History.

Over the duration of three weeks, the course introduced learners to Burns’s life and reputation, his poems and songs, and his celebrity through three key areas: ‘Who was Robert Burns’?; ‘Was he a poet or songwriter?’ and ‘What made Burns an international icon’. Those taking the course worked through a combination of videos, audio readings and songs, articles and exercises to learn more about the Bard, focussing in particular on such perennial favourites as ‘Scots Wha Hae’, ‘Ae Fond Kiss’, ‘A Man’s a Man’, ‘The Vision’, ‘A Red Red Rose’ and ‘Auld Lang Syne’. The course even offered the opportunity for learners to try their hands at transcribing digitised manuscripts in the poet’s own hand.

Perhaps one testament to the success of the first run of the course was that it attracted people from around the globe. Learners signed up from Canada and the United States, Scandinavia, Russia and the Balkan States, Bangladesh, Thailand, Singapore, Japan, New Zealand, Australia, and South Africa. This spread of participants stands as testament to the continuing international reach of Scotland’s national bard. Indeed, one of the activities asked learners to locate something related to the commemoration of Burns in their part of the world, the results of which (on view at https://www.padlet.com/Burns_MOOC/n99q4ydw90u and on the interactive map at https://www.zeemaps.com/map?group=1756623) confirm the Bard’s global appeal.

Another aspect of the course that underlines the poet’s continuing broad appeal is the range of ages represented among learners, from 18-25 year-olds through to the retired. Their occupations ranged from teachers, health, charity and public sector workers, those who worked in manufacturing and retail or publishing and the arts, through to the
words of business and finance. As diverse as they were in terms of culture, background, education, and prior knowledge of Burns, these individuals came together to form a friendly and supportive community. Overall, their response to the course was overwhelmingly positive, as the small sample of comments below suggests:

“It was true to say it was a wonderful universal experience.”

“I have learnt a lot about RB 90% of which I had not known before I completed this course”

“I loved this course - many thanks to all involved.”

“…an interesting and inspiring course!”

“It was a very interesting and enjoyable course. As a person who had never studied Burns’s oeuvre before, I found it quite comprehensible. I definitely learnt a lot during this course and discovered the beauty of Scottish poetry through Robert Burn's talent. Thank you!”

“A most enjoyable and informative course I remember when I passed my driving test all these years ago my instructor said to me “well done, now go and learn to drive” I will continue to do more study following your course thanks to Glasgow for truly great tutors.”

“I've thoroughly enjoyed the course. Thank you for the varied content and the excellent presentations. I am more than ever amazed at Burns’ energy and genius.”

The team at Glasgow University hope to build on this success and bring Burns to an even larger audience. The MOOC will continue to run twice a year, once each January and again each summer, with the next run scheduled to start on the 18th July 2016. This free course is to form part of a suite of online provision offered by Scottish Literature and the Centre for Robert Burns Studies, and will be complemented this September with the launch of a longer 10-week paid-for course. The longer course will be fully accredited by the University of Glasgow and is aimed at a smaller audience, who will be taught by staff from the Centre for Robert Burns Studies on such topics as Burns and religion, politics, landscape, biography, and the poet's ‘afterlife’. 
Irvine Publish eBook
Picking Up Their Own Challenge
Publishing Their Own ‘Castlepark’ Edition
Bill Nolan

If you put an i- or an e- in front of certain words, such as phone or mail, it can create sheer panic among those not particularly tuned into modern information and communications technology (ICT), while the cognoscenti, who have no fear of computers, seldom bat an eyelid at this terminology and are so unfazed that they don’t even manage a nonchalant shrug of the shoulders. Unfortunately, these two groups are often polarised by age and skills and while hesitating to mention generation gaps, the former generally consists of older people while youngsters dominate the latter. Today’s young people have been handling electronic devices in different forms and formats since their early days in nursery school and they switch easily between operating systems and software without having to stop and think.

Two years ago, at the RBWF Conference, Irvine Burns Club threw down the challenge of “Can Robert Burns ever become ‘cool’ to the current generation?” No firm conclusions came out of that Irvine Conference other than an agreement that before we can interest young people, we have to engage them initially via media and systems with which they are already familiar and use daily. On top of that, we need to speak and listen to what they are saying and understand that they will be best stimulated via tools that they have been using almost since birth.

Harnessing an initiative created by North Ayrshire Council’s Heritage Team in association with local technical expert Jim Gibb of Halo Digital Art, an Irvine primary school picked up the local Burns Club’s challenge and the successful outcome is the publication of an e-book by the Primary 5/6 pupils of Castlepark Primary School entitled “Robert Burns in Irvine”. To set the minds of the cautious to rest, an e-Book is remarkably similar to any other book but with one noticeable difference, it is an *electronic* version of a traditional print book that can be read by using a personal computer or by using an eBook reader. Generally, an eBook can be downloaded from anywhere in a matter of minutes and, think Kindle, is readily transportable. But it is much more than that medium because an e-book can also contain photographs, video clips, animation and recordings to bring its contents to life in a way that a simple print book can’t achieve.
Jim Gibb of Halo Digital Art working with Castlepark PS children from P5/6 in creating their e-Book via their individual I-Pads

That may sound complicated to you and I but it didn’t to the Primary 5/6 children at Castlepark Primary School in Irvine who were selected to benefit from a learning programme that was introduced by North Ayrshire Council’s Heritage Team with funding support from the Scottish Library and Information Council. The exercise was to develop and create digital content using local history resources with the research being carried out by senior primary school children.

Castlepark School approached Irvine Burns Club for assistance and the children were given ready access to its Wellwood Burns Centre & Museum and its entire collection of priceless Burns items. Their findings, including several pieces of creative writing in Scots inspired by their enhanced knowledge of Burns, were then presented in the form of an e-book, which the children also illustrated, compiled and created under the guidance of Jim Gibb using i-pads and the web.

The result is a highly imaginative and stimulating publication, the creation of which introduced these youngsters to a range of opportunities and activities to stimulate their mind, and develop research, ICT and literary skills, all of which made learning about Robert Burns and their own heritage more vibrant and accessible.
In a Foreword, Irvine Burns Club’s Hon. Secretary, Bill Nolan commented “In their excellent e-Book, the children of Castlepark Primary School have not only captured the essence of the story of Burns’ transformation while living in Irvine but have also shown by their own writings that fledgling poets are still to be found within touching distance of Eglinton Woods. We enjoyed working with the children, their teachers and the NAC Heritage Team who provided the technical support for the project. It was both a challenge and an inspiration to be working surrounded by such enthusiasm.”

Castlepark Primary School is now part of that growing band of local people who are determined to tell the world about Irvine’s role in shaping the life of Scotia’s Bard. To them, Robert Burns and his poems have suddenly become “pretty cool”.

The cover of the Castlepark PS e-Book
The Genius of Scotland
The Cultural Production of Robert Burns, 1785–1834
Corey E. Andrews

Professor Andrews writes “The primary goal of this book is to determine the means and methods that led to Burns cultural and national valorisation, a process of veneration and consecration that continues into the present day.”

Professor Andrews examines Burns and his work together as a production of the literati and the commercial marketplace of Burns time and of the period following his death, looking in detail at the controversy presented between the works and Burns life as portrayed by the literary establishment of the day. He examines the origins of Burns image as a natural genius with the “heaven-taught ploughman” persona, going on to Burns status as the National Bard of Scotland and the poet’s own influences on these titles and describers. Numerous contemporary reports and writers are analysed, leading on to examination of Burns’ posthumous reputation with particular attention to the early biographies and tributes and how these influenced his lasting reputation, revealing how and why Burns was culturally produced as a national genius and how the process continues to influence our understanding of Burns. Excitingly, the early posthumous memoirs of George Thomson, Robert Heron and Maria Riddell are scrupulously reassessed. Poetry after Burns is looked at in extensive detail, particularly the works of James Hogg.

This all-examining study supplements each chapter with substantial end-notes. The Genius of Scotland is primarily intended for an academic audience of graduate students and professors, but it is also designed to appeal to general readers interested in Burns, Scotland, and/or British history. One of the series ‘Scottish Cultural Review of Language and Literature’,

The Genius Of Scotland
The Cultural Production of Robert Burns 1785 – 1834
Corey E. Andrews
Brill Rodopi £ 72.00
Who wrote the Scots Musical Museum?
The W. Ormiston Roy Memorial Lecture 2015
Murray Pittock

The print version of the Professor Pittock’s lecture is brought to us by Studies in Scottish Literature as an extra publication in addition to their annual volume (which is now online as a Spring edition as well as the traditional Fall). In this small booklet of 27 pages, subtitled “Challenging Editorial Practice in the Presence of Authorial Absence”, Murray Pittock covers the background to his recent editorial work on James Johnson’s Scots Musical Museum, soon to be published as part of the multivolume Oxford Edition of Burns, highlights his difficulties in the highly complex editorial process, and poses several questions on the nature of authorship versus editorship in the collaboration necessary for song publication, the current editorial questions being further complicated by the development of the tunes as they progressed through the various issues of the editions, all highlighting the enormity of the task for the present Editor.

For Burnsians interested in Robert’s many contributions to the canon of Scots song, this is a most interesting precursor to Professor Pittock’s long awaited edition of the Scots Musical Museum, now undergoing the complexity of proofing as it goes through the press for publication next year.

Who wrote the Scots Musical Museum?
The W. Ormiston Roy Memorial Lecture 2015
Murray Pittock
ISBN 9781530581542
Studies in Scottish Literature Available on Amazon not University of South Carolina Libraries £ 6.00
For as long as I have been a devotee of the life and works of Robert Burns I have had a cringe about the “shortbread tin” marketing technique of attaching Burns’ name to almost anything to promote sales, and more lately I have developed my aversion to those who misuse the by-name Rabbie incorrectly for our Robert. This book fails on both these counts and on these bases almost did not make the cut for a review in the Burns Chronicle. But my personal taste should not determine everything to be chronicled. So to our review:-

This is a collection of the poetry by American, Mr Laurence Overmire, inspired by his 2014 tour of Scotland, the land of his ancestors, which we can relive with him as the tour is recounted in around 70 poems. The book has Introduction by Ted Cowan, (who he did not meet), a Preface setting out his ancestral background, and early opinions which have been sought from several personalities, one of whom, Stewart MacNiel of Barra writes “combines history lessons with scenes as a tourist just fumbling along”. Several pages of Liner Notes at the end of the book illuminate detail of the circumstances for the poems.

I will not review the poems per se, they act as a diary and travelogue of this adventure through Scotland to visit the land of his forebears and gives an interesting perspective of our land.

The Ghost of Rabbie Burns
An American Poet’s Journey Through Scotland
Laurence Overmire
ISBN 978-0-9795398-6-2
Indelible Mark Publishing $17.95
Studies in Scottish Literature,
volume 42, issue 1
Editors; Patrick Scott & Anthony Jarrels

Volume 42 returns to SSL’s publication pattern prior to 1978, with two issues, this one issued digitally in late spring, and a second to follow later in the year, giving the editorial team more flexibility in publication in line with modern demands. As previously, publication in print format through Amazon follows digital release.

The new issue has a number of interesting Burns items, Professor Murray Pittock's Ormiston Roy Lecture, which was also published as a stand-alone booklet and reviewed in this Chronicle, is carried as is an interesting perspective on Tam o’ Shanter, by Gerry McKeever of University of Glasgow and astute comments on the “As I Walk’d by myself” manuscript in Burns’ hand by Patrick Scott. The other articles will no doubt interest many Burnsians as will the books reviewed and noted. And of course all freely available online at http://scholarcommons.sc.edu/ssl/vol42/iss1/

Robert Burns Lives!
Editor; Frank Shaw

I would almost say this comes from the same corner of the world as the above, if websites can be considered geographic, Robert Burns Lives! transcends geography with followers all over the, emphasis on, worldwide, web. Small wonder, with a constant feed of quality and interesting Burns items, again from around the Burnsian globe, RBL! is always worth following at http://www.electricscotland.com/familytree/frank/burns.htm . I have it on my favourites bar.

University of Glasgow

Web browsers should always remember the work going on at The Centre for Robert Burns Studies, shown on their website, google Centre for Robert Burns Studies, and the very interesting website of the AHRC project, Editing Robert Burns for the 21st Century, http://burnsc21.glasgow.ac.uk/ with all the tweets, blogs, podcasts, performances, scholarly notes, updates and other outputs of all those working on this fantastic project.
Dirt
William Letford

This second collection of Billy Letford’s poetry demonstrates his growing maturity and comfort as a published Poet. The pages vary in stanza form, style, voice and tone, frequently humorous, sometimes hard others more gentle, always saying something, often in his natural dialect, always great use the language chosen for the particular expression. There are several verses which catch my enthusiasm, the tale of the busker outside Greggs, the salutation to his Granny, the love poetry, Lovers of Burns will love the poetry of William Letford.

Dirt
William Letford
ISBN 9 7817 84 102005 £9.95
Carcanet Press.

Wiersze I Spiwyki Roberta Burnsa
Translator & Editor Miroslaw Syniawa

This collection of translations of Burns, into the Slavic language of Silesian, came to my desk as the copy for the Chronicle went to the printer. It is of particular interest to native Scots as an expression of a natural language under pressure from the “official language” of our country. Hamish MacDonald, Scots Scriever at the National Library of Scotland and Dr Tomasz Kamusella of the University of St Andrews write afterwords summarizing similarities between Scotland and Silesia and drawing parallels on the historic struggles for the status of our native tongues. These astute commentaries are worth the trouble of finding a copy of this volume for yourselves. The thirty two poems chosen are not just the familiar favourites but many lesser known are gathered into this fine sample from the canon.

Wiersze I Spiwyki Roberta Burnsa
Trans. & Ed. Miroslaw Syniawa
ISBN 978-83-65558-00-8
Silesia Progress
125 Years of The Burns Chronicle

In 2017, The Robert Burns World Federation celebrates 125 years’ continuous publication of The Burns Chronicle. It is indeed a time for great celebration. After some years of trying to fulfil a number of functions, the Chronicle is again an annual volume. It is dedicated to important articles and interesting contributions from scholars of recognized standing, supported by an ever popular Newsletter carrying the ephemera of Club news and events around the world. All previous editions are now being digitized and displayed on the web http://www.rbwf.org.uk/digitised-chronicles/, thus allowing ready access and reference for all. There is talk of publishing extra pages of unseen material and other content on the RBWF website as a ‘Chronicle Extra.’ This may be a little way off, but this development, including possible video-content is under active discussion as the Burns Chronicle continues to develop.

Guided by Literature Convener Mike Duguid, the Board took a courageous step in 2013 in directing that the Chronicle should return to a single annual volume. This was after the magazine style, multi-purpose 3-4 editions per annum had suffered years of declining circulation. Many had campaigned over the years for such a move but the prevailing economic circumstances argued against that. The Board also bravely directed that both style and content be directed towards substantial features and scholarly articles - in a volume of around 150 pages!

In the early years of Duncan McNaught’s editorship in the 19th century, volumes of up to 200 pages were the norm. Federation and Club information only occupied 15 or 20 pages, but later in our history, half of an edition of 220 pages could be occupied by such matters. In more recent times, Club reports and the Federation record gave way altogether and many lamented their passing. The new Editor was directed to restore reporting of Federation annual business etc. in the Chronicle in a concise historical record. Now, of the prescribed 150 pages, with preambles etc, and adverts (of which there are but few) there may be now over 130 pages of interesting and informative articles.

Articles carried in recent editions have proved of substantial interest to Burns Club Members. Many have mentioned the Reviews section; the illustration of rarely-seen manuscripts of the poet prove very popular, as are reports of new academic studies into the Life & Work of Burns. Items on various statues and unusual commemorations of the Bard always have a readership. Some Clubs are now buying multiple copies of the Chronicle for distribution among their enthusiasts thus confirming popular interest
in its current material. This is most refreshing to the Federation when we are printing fewer Chronicles than previously, and hopefully is indicative of a reverse in our fortunes. The new life brought to the Chronicle by the digitization of back numbers will widen the availability of the archive to the world and may further strengthen readership numbers for current issues.

It may be surprising that over 200 years after the death of Robert Burns and after over 125 editions of the Burns Chronicle, articles are still being published with new and fresh information on the life and works of our Bard. Previously undiscovered manuscripts come to light; examinations of the poet’s life reveal formerly unknown detail; earlier mis-interpretations are corrected - and the Burns Chronicle is still here to record and publish it all. The annual Chronicle is again being widely quoted as a reference in new academic articles. The return to the annual volume has reinstated both the position of the Burns Chronicle, and the standing of The Robert Burns World Federation, as authorities on all matters related to Robert Burns and as a hub for Burns celebrations and commemorations worldwide.

The Federation can be justifiably proud of its Chronicle in its present form as a worthy successor to the mantle first donned by our predecessors in 1891. We now look forward to the next 125 years!
Statue Returns to Walker Park, Newcastle

The statue of Robert Burns erected by the Walker Burns Club in 1901, subsequently vandalised, removed to Heaton Park and then lost from public view since, has been restored to Walker Park. Or at least a replica now stands there, the original having been restored sufficiently for details to be scanned enabling a good facsimile to be created. The renovated original statue is in Jesmond Dean Visitor Centre.

The new statue has been placed on a high stone column in the location where the original stood until circa 1974. At the original unveiling in 1901 there was comment that, as the statue faced south, Burns had his back to Scotland, the 2016 version looks North East, it doesn’t just face Scotland but gestures back to Alloway.
Scottish Government Plaque at Camperdown Burns Statue

The efforts of everyone involved in the restoration and conservation of the statue of Robert Burns in Camperdown, Victoria, Australia, have been recognised in a plaque conveying the appreciation of the Scottish Government for their endeavours. The plaque, shown below, was unveiled on 26th June 2015.

Bells Ring Out in Perth

On Saturday 23rd January 2016 shoppers in Perth city centre were entertained to Burns tunes ringing out from the belfry of St John’s Kirk. The recital was played by Dr Ian Cassells, one of the country’s leading carilloneurs, on the 35 bell carillon installed at St John’s in 1935 as part of the Kirk becoming the WW1 Memorial to the fallen of Perth & Perthshire. It also features some of the church’s bells from the 16th century. Dr Cassells plays throughout the UK but Perth is very much a favourite, he is quoted as saying “the beautiful tones of the upper bells are unparalleled in Britain, indeed they are the equal of the best in Europe,”

The Burns recital featured several well known tunes associated with the Bard arranged for carillon by Dr Cassells who plays regular recitals at Perth, including occasionally pieces he has composed,
The Burns Chronicle Digitisation Project

From the outset of The Burns Chronicle in January 1892, as the name implies, the Federation’s journal serves two distinct purposes: firstly it was to provide a medium for airing the latest scholarship on all aspects of Burns, secondly, it was also to furnish a vehicle for the clubs to exchange information and ideas, and keep each other informed of their activities.

The format has changed several times over the last 124 years as editors put their personal stamp on the journal. The last major change in 2014 returning to the large annual volume and replacing the smaller three-per-year editions introduced in 2002, supplementing the Chronicle with a bi-monthly Newsletter to provide members with regular club information.

The inaugural volume of 1892 was priced at one shilling (5p) and by 1974 the price had only risen to 50p (40p for Federation members). Financing the Chronicle has been a perennial problem particularly in recent years. In an effort to provide the necessary funding the Federation increased membership rates but offered a free copy of the Chronicle as a perk of membership.

The intention was for the club's copy of the Chronicle to be circulated among its members but many failed to do this with the result that most members never saw the Chronicle. Hence most were unaware of the wonderful array of scholarly articles which have featured in the Chronicle over its 125 year history.

Burns Chronicle collectors have long advocated the usefulness of this hidden resource and for a number of years the Literature Committee have discussed various schemes to widen the appreciation and use. This prompted the Federation to launch a project to digitise all volumes of the Chronicle back to 1892.

The initial intention was to purchase a scanner and fund an operator to carry out the scanning. A bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to cover the cost was rejected and Convenor of the Literature Committee, Mike Duguid, researching alternatives found Digital Document Scanning and Retrieval (DDSR), based in Wishaw and was impressed by the work they carried out. Options were discussed and in order to keep costs to a minimum DDSR recommended the supply of volumes on which the spine could be guillotined off, this being much cheaper than scanning a bound volume, before scanning page-by-page to give the best clarity. DDSR also offered high quality Optical Character Recognition (OCR) as part of the finished product.
Mike magnanimously offered early copies from his own large collection for the initial digitisation. However, several editions from the 1899-1923 period were missing and an appeal to fill the gaps yielded only a few volumes, perhaps not surprising in view of the need to sacrifice the spine. Luckily a solution offered itself when the National Trust of Scotland (NTS) property Broughton House in Kirkcudbright acquired a scanner through a generous donation from the NTS London Members Group. The artist Edward Atkinson Hornel, as well as being a prominent member of the Glasgow Boys group of artists, was also a keen Burns fan and had collected a complete set of Burns Chronicles as part of his outstanding Burns collection. Mike scanned the missing volumes and DDSR applied the OCR software to provide a high quality result.

Solway Offset in Dumfries, the current printer of the Chronicle, already had digital versions going back to the year 2000 and these have been similarly utilised.

In order to fund this project the idea was struck of offering clubs and individuals the opportunity to sponsor a volume in their name or as a dedication to others. The price for this was set at £50 and to date some 69 volumes have been sponsored. There are a similar number still available for sponsorship and it is hoped that more members will come forward to fund a digitised Chronicle and have their name recognised in perpetuity.

The volumes which have already been digitised are now on the Federation’s website under the ‘Resources’ tab. These can be viewed on screen or downloaded and can then be searched by clicking the ‘View’ tab, selecting ‘Advanced Search’ option and typing in the required word or phrase. Chronicle contents pages are listed separately to assist in the search for particular topics.

Currently there is free access to these digitised Chronicles but the option of charging non-members of the Federation a small access fee is being actively investigated. As the availability of digitised Chronicles becomes more widely known, Federation members and general public will become much better informed about the work of the Federation and, in particular, the significant contribution made by the Burns Chronicle in fulfilling its objective.
Donald Paton Recognised

Donald Paton retired as Secretary of Perth Burns Club after 35 years of service, only interrupted by one year when he was serving as Club President. Donald has given exemplary service to the Club, meticulously carrying out secretarial duties, organising speakers for the annual dinner and for monthly Club meetings, overseeing the establishment of annual children’s competitions in 1987 and the very successful St Andrews Day seminars which have become a flagship event for the club over the past twelve years. His dedicated work has helped firmly establish Perth Burns Club as leading celebrants of the Bard and all things Scottish.

The Club marked his outstanding service to the club with a gift of a custom made clock, presented at the Annual Dinner by Dr Peter Hughes OBE, President of RBWF.

Outside the Club, he is well known as a speaker and performer at many Burns gatherings as well as writing extensively on the history and culture of the city. In recognition of all this, Perth and Kinross Council have presented him with the David K. Thomson Award for services to cultural activity within Perth and Kinross.

Donald and his wife Wilma after presentation of the David K Thomson Award
William Angus McIlvanney
25th November 1936 to 5th December 2015
Gerard Carruthers,
Francis Hutcheson Professor of Scottish Literature,
University of Glasgow

With the death of William (Willie) McIlvanney Ayrshire, Scotland and, indeed, contemporary writing has lost one of its most powerful presences. In the wake of Willie's demise at the age of 79, much has been trotted out about how he was ‘the Godfather of Tartan Noir’ and the ‘keeper of Scotland’s soul’. Privately, the first label used to rub him up the wrong way and although he once told me he was flattered by the second description what he wanted (he explained) was to live in a country with a conscience – or a soul – that was more generally in evidence. And he hoped he spoke to some extent for that conscience-examining part of the country - the United Kingdom as much as his native Caledonia.

It is well-known that Willie was gazumped by the popular Taggart series; around the time of its genesis, he had been in talks about the making of a set of TV programmes about his fictional detective, Laidlaw, who features in the novels, Laidlaw (1977), The Papers of Tony Veitch (1983) and Strange Loyalties (1991). Laidlaw is naturally a philosopher, contemplating time and again the solidity or otherwise of family, community and human sympathy amid the flux of existence and the anti-humanist pressures of the world, especially the capitalist world. Laidlaw is often pessimistic about the consequences of the human world in action but mines out occasions of human nobility amidst it, all the more noble because the odds are stacked against its effective agency. The Laidlaw books also featured an exhilarating fictional terrain where occasion of squalid crime led to extended mediation on the cultural geography of contemporary society. In this sense, William McIlvanney deserved his ‘Godfather’ epithet as dozens of crime writers in Scotland and beyond have followed this lead over the past quarter of a century or so.

Willie was a socialist, not an ‘old-fashioned’ one, but a practical one who believed that communal values and their assertion made us most human, both in our communal achievements and also in our communal abilities to shelter one another from our inevitable misfortunes - whether self-inflicted or visited upon us by overbearing and uncaring forces. Willie’s fiction often speaks for intelligent working-class protagonists who are autodidacts or who otherwise have made their way in the world educationally. Willie’s own formation, as a student of English at the University of Glasgow predated the Robbins Report of 1963 which led to an expansion of the universities in the UK and widened their access. However, his coming to prominence in the 1960s (his first novel, Remedy is None [1966] won the Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize) spoke to the
new appetite of the post-war period for the ‘working class’ locus. In the early
twenty-first century, such terrain seems relatively routine, but the 1960s was
a watershed period and none spoke more eloquently, in unblinkered and
trenchant fashion of this background. No doubt Willie’s talent would have
emerged whatever the circumstances as he was one of the finest prose-stylists
in English fiction since Robert Louis Stevenson or Thomas Hardy, but it was
basically a happy coincidence that purveying the subject-matter he did, he
was writing in the second half of the twentieth century. Remedy is None is a
brilliantly paced, nerve-jangling Bildungsroman about a young university
student from an industrial town in the west of Scotland who has aspirations
to be a writer against the ‘backdrop’ of a dying father and the difficulty of early
adult relationships – both with people and environment. Often cited are the
influences of Camus and Hamlet; these and many others are unobtrusively
apparent across the McIlvanney canon. Willie McIlvanney was always a writer,
indeed an intellectual, who never believed that ‘high art’ was an exclusive
province.

Arguably, his greatest novel his third, Docherty (1975), winner of the
Whitbread prize, is one of the finest of all ‘historical’ novels ever to be
produced in Scotland or, for that matter, Britain. Its eponymous protagonist
is a miner coping with the Great Depression of the 1930s; Docherty himself
and the narrative overall feature a sharpness of wit that often unsentimentally
transfigures the grimmest of circumstance. A second ‘historical’ novel, The
Kiln (1996) narrates the trajectory of British life from the 1950s down to the
period of Thatcher, with a strong slightly earlier reference point also being
Alexander Fleming, the discoverer of penicillin - like McIlvanney himself an old
boy of Kilmarnock Academy. It is a novel sceptical in the face of the still all-too
prevalent myth that things are constantly getting better. This is McIlvanney’s
writing at its most graceful – understanding of individual human endeavour,
scathing of heartless and unintelligent ideology, especially here the crude
market logic of ‘Thatcherism’.

Inevitably in the coming time, there will be a reassessment of the McIlvanney
oeuvre, and it might be hoped that more attention is given to his poetry (3
volumes, of which the best is perhaps The Longships in Harbour: Poems [1970]).
Chairing an event featuring Willie I once committed the faux-pas of referring
to his two volumes of poetry; ‘three!’ he immediately shouted. Willie loved
poetry, and was at least as knowledgeable in the genre as in fiction. In an age
where poetry seems to specialise in mystification, Willie’s poetry had all the
stylistic rigour and linguistic playfulness that anyone might require while at
the same time being clear in its communication, even when as often the case
dealing with complicated subject-matter, especially relationships. The same
lyricism, forensic intelligence and sympathy informs Willie McIlvanney’s poetry
as is found – it should be no surprise really – in the case of his fiction. One of
the redeeming features of often unpropitious human life in the McIlvanney oeuvre, generally, is the agency of language in its clear-sighted tenderness as much as its wit. Art does not necessarily redeem but it is part of our common humanity.

Rightly, Willie McIlvanney valued the fact that he was widely accessible. His charisma and winning courtesy at readings and events made him many new readers there and then. These qualities, I am tempted to believe, were also apparent in his writing. When I was part of a group of Visiting Researchers at All Souls College, Oxford, I was chatting to a law professor visiting from Chicago and amid the small-talk at dinner, her face lit up when she heard that I knew Willie and a short time afterwards she and her husband were overjoyed when I was able to pass on to them one of Willie’s books signed by the author. I also once was chatting by chance to a bloke from London in a bar in the capital who had read and enjoyed all of Willie’s novels. What are the odds? Willie had reach! I first became acquainted with Willie when he was Visiting Professor in English at the University of Strathclyde when I was on the staff there in the mid-1990s. It is often assumed that writers know how to talk about literature when more often than not they don’t. Willie McIlvanney most certainly did know how to talk critically about literature, and I remember watching fascinated as he entranced a class with his reading of Walter Scott’s ‘The Two Drovers’ as the ‘first western’. Another story repeated at the time of his death in obits is about the number of people during Willie’s seventeen years as a school-teacher who found him inspirational. Leaving aside my own direct experience at Strathclyde, there have been at least a dozen different occasions (in Ayrshire, Glasgow or Edinburgh) when conversation with people has turned to modern Scottish writing and someone has revealed to me that they were once one of Willie’s pupils: their tale is always more or less the same – he was a life-enhancing teacher. Obituaries can be platitudinous, but in this aspect I know they most certainly are not. We often resort to labels for notable phenomena and though I might quibble with how properly summative the ‘Godfather of Tartan Noir’ was for Willie McIlvanney, I have no trouble in saluting his proper epithet as one of the finest British novelists of the last sixty years.
Thomas Sutherland

Tom Sutherland, Dean of Agriculture at the American University of Beirut in Lebanon, was kidnapped by Islamic Jihad on June 9, 1985. He was released on November 18, 1991 having been held hostage for 2,353 days and famously kept up his spirits and the morale of his fellow prisoners by reciting the works of Robert Burns. At the press conference on his release he recited *To a Mouse* and told of hearing, on BBC World Service, Kenneth McKellar singing *My Love is Like a Red, Red Rose* at the request of his wife Jean. He said, “I heard his voice and it was the only time I cried throughout those years.” That request, however, had told Tom that Jean knew that he was alive… Following his release he became renowned as a public speaker on the Lebanese situation, his tribulations as a hostage and of course at Burns gatherings. He was the principal guest at West Sound Burns Supper among others, spoke at the annual Glasgow Conference and addressed the RBWF Conference in 2001 in Atlanta.

Tom was raised on the family farm at Airth, just south of Kincardine Bridge and took a B.Sc. in Agriculture at Glasgow before moving to the US. He was awarded a master’s degree and PhD in animal breeding from Iowa State University and then taught animal science at Colorado State University. He moved to Beirut in 1983 for a three-year term as Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture & Food Science at the American University in Beirut, Following his release he continued to live with his wife Jean in Fort Collins, Colorado.

He and other former hostages filed a lawsuit against the State of Iran for aiding the Lebanese kidnappers and Tom’s family were awarded $35 million. With this windfall they established the Sutherland Family Foundation which gave a large portion of its funds to charities, youth and community projects. Tom pledged $500,000 himself to underwrite the $1.1 million purchase of a historic building in Fort Collins to become home to the Bas Bleu Theatre Company. In 2003 Sutherland took a part in Athol Fugard’s play *A Lesson From Aloes* exploring the effects of apartheid on black and white friends in South Africa. He said performing in the play was a way of repaying poets like Robert Burns whose words helped him survive the ordeal in Lebanon.
Thomas Bannerman Myles  
21st December 1925 – 17th January 2016

Tom Myles was born in Falkirk in the room used by Burns on his tour of 1787. Seventeen years late he gave his first toast, The Lasses, at a Burns supper and so began a lifelong attachment to the life and works of Robert Burns. Tom was not a member of any Burns Club for a long time but joined enthusiastically in the reformation of Cumbernauld and District Burns Club, no 581. He was at various times Secretary, Treasurer, President, and was an Honorary President. Tom represented his Club on Glasgow Association and became President of Glasgow and District Burns Association 1987 -1989 and led the organisation of the Glasgow Garden Festival weekend in 1988, one of the most memorable Federation events ever. Tom represented Glasgow on the Executive of the Federation for a number of years, becoming Chairman of Marketing and always offering solid opinions on all matters. Tom was a very active Director of Jean Armour Burns Houses and Trustee of the Jean Armour Burns Trust.

One of the most able of Burns orators, Tom was most generous with his time and talents, sharing his vast knowledge at Club nights and dinners over a wide area of Central Scotland and was equally generous with advice and support of other speakers. His ready assistance and willingness to share his experience and knowledge will be greatly missed far beyond Cumbernauld.

His funeral service, fittingly on 25th January, was attended by many Burnsians and the eulogy was delivered by Burns Federation Past President and close friend George Anderson.

Dr. Harry McGilp

Harry McGilp passed away on Friday 4th September, 2015. Harry was a member of Greenock Burns Club, known as the Mother Club, for many years and served as President in 1978. He was also a Past President of the Renfrewshire Association of Burns Clubs and was a well known Member of the Robert Burns World Federation. Harry was a regular at the Club meetings and attended the Annual Celebration on 25th January this year. He made a great contribution to the Club and the Burns movement, being very supportive of the decision to allow women to become members of the Mother Club. He will be sadly missed by all who knew him.

Jim Donnelly
The Robert Burns World Federation
President 2016 - 2017
Bobby Kane
A Message from the President  
Bobby Kane

As I think back to my days as a boy when I was first introduced to the works of Robert Burns by my Grandfather I would never have imagined that I would be writing this message to you all as President of the Robert Burns World Federation and I know he would have been as proud as I am to have achieved this office.

It is certainly my aim to carry on the good work of the many dedicated members who have previously occupied this position and I hope that while I am President we can all work together, united in one aim, which is to take our Federation forward.

Since becoming an Office Bearer and member of the Board of Directors we have always endeavoured to be open and transparent in all the work that we do for the RBWF. It has been our aim to ensure members are up to speed with all of the efforts that Directors and staff put into the running of your organisation; we want you all to be fully engaged with our plans to strengthen this wonderful organisation. Everything we do is for the benefit of the RBWF and both myself, and indeed any Office Bearer, welcome questions or suggestions that any member may wish to raise.

Like any organisation we continue to face many challenges, most notably financial, as well as retaining existing and encouraging new members. Over the last year we have worked with two groups of Masters Students from the Business School of Strathclyde University. This school is well known as one of the finest in the UK and attracts students from all over the world. The students have completed two projects, one on membership the other, our profile. We will be meeting shortly to look at these ideas in detail and we will keep everyone up to date with progress.

We have just had our Annual Conference in Peebles which I am sure those who attended enjoyed as much as Karen and I did. It was a fabulous weekend and the great atmosphere of both friendship and fellowship is a credit to our Federation and I thank you all for your good wishes and wonderful messages of support.

In closing I would just like to remind you all that this is your Federation and while we do face tough challenges.

Bobby Kane
Conference 2016

The 2016 Robert Burns World Federation Conference & AGM was held at Peebles Hydro on 9th-11th September 2016 and began on Friday evening with an informal dinner followed by entertainment from ‘Luath’ along with several delegates.

President Peter Hughes welcomed everyone to the AGM on Saturday morning. Overseas delegates introduced themselves and were warmly received. A list of Obituaries was read and a one-minute silence was observed.

Published reports were received with Jim Thomson providing an update on the current financial position, explaining that in general terms the position is much improved having reduced expenditure by 21%. This will continue to reduce with staff costs falling. Any member wishing specific information should email and it will be provided.

In addition to his Report, our Marketing Director Murdo Morrison spoke of the increase in popularity of local radio stations and encouraged delegates members to make use of these to increase publicity for their clubs and for the RBWF. Senior VP Bobby Kane provided an update on the University Marketing Projects that had been undertaken this year. There are many fantastic ideas and some will be taken forward.

Editor Bill Dawson advised that comments on editions are gratefully received and guide the style of future editions. It is also gratifying that clubs are asking for further copies which reflects the popularity of the current style. The 2017 edition of the Chronicle is with the printer.

All other reports were as published.

Election of office bearers:
There being only one candidate for each post the following were appointed by Acclamation:
Bobby Kane - President
Ian McIntyre - SVP
American Director – Les Strachan
Canadian Director – Ronnie O’Byrne
Pacific Rim Director – Jim O’Lone

There being 2 nominations for Junior Vice-President; both nominees gave their presentation to Conference, votes were cast postal votes added and Bill Nolan was duly elected.
Election of Directors
Literature Convener, Mike Duguid
Heritage Convener, Ian McIntyre
Conference Convener, Jane Brown
Schools Convener, Patricia Leslie
Marketing Convener, Murdo Morrison
Archivist, Bill Dawson

In Any Other Business there was a suggestion from Medicine Hat BC to raise income for RBWF by inviting Burns Clubs to add the equivalent of $1 per head to their Burns supper ticket, (this to be entirely voluntary and up to individual clubs).

The new Board structure was also explained, more information on this will follow.

There followed one of the highlights of Conference, John Chapman and Boyd Tunnock were made Honorary President of RBWF. These honours were graciously received by both.

President Peter Hughes, then presented a Certificate of Honorary Life Membership of the Federation to Joe McGinty in recognition of many years of outstanding service. Joe was overwhelmed and although lost for words, responded with a song.

Conference Convenor, Jim Gibson confirmed that the 2016 Conference will again be held in Peebles over the weekend of 8th to 10th September 2017.

In the afternoon, Rab Wilson presented a seminar.

At Conference Dinner in the evening, Bobby Kane received the Presidential Chain from Peter Hughes before he presented Peter with his Past President’s Medal. Toasts were made and dancing followed. The National Raffle was drawn during the proceedings.

At Sunday morning Worship, President Bobby Kane, Immediate Past President Peter Hughes and Rev. David Ness contributed to the service.
The Robert Burns World Federation Limited

Statement of financial activities (incorporating the income and expenditure account)

For the year ended 30 April 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unrestricted funds</th>
<th>Restricted funds</th>
<th>2015 Total</th>
<th>2014 Total</th>
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<td>Notes £</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
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<tr>
<td>Incoming resources</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Voluntary income</td>
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<td><strong>Total incoming resources</strong></td>
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<td>20,534</td>
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| Resources expended | | | |
| Costs of generating funds: | | | |
| Cost of generating voluntary income | 5 | 6,677 | - | 6,677 | 11,726 |
| Charitable activities | 6 | 75,429 | 17,280 | 92,709 | 124,218 |
| Governance costs | 7 | 2,040 | - | 2,040 | 2,040 |
| **Total resources expended** | | 84,146 | 17,280 | 101,426 | 137,984 |

Net income/expenditure for the year

- 6,068 3,254 9,322 (30,991)

Other recognised gains and losses

Losses on revaluation of investment assets

- 11 (292) - (292) (2,384)

Net movement in funds

- 5,776 3,254 9,030 (33,375)

Total funds brought forward

- 64,143 28,791 92,934 126,309

Total funds carried forward

- 69,919 32,045 101,964 92,934
The Robert Burns World Federation Limited

Balance sheet
as at 30 April 2015

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
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<td>44,390</td>
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<td>Current assets</td>
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<td>Stocks</td>
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<td>Debtors</td>
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<td>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</td>
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<td>Net current assets</td>
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<td>Total assets less current liabilities</td>
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<td>Accruals and deferred income</td>
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<td>Funds</td>
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<td>Revaluation reserve</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total funds</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>101,964</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Robert Burns Quiz
Stirling 1314 LLP
West Sound Radio

**Clubs**

**Ayrshire**
Afton Lily Burns Club (Cumnock)
Alloway Burns Club
Ayr Burns Club
Ayr Police Burns Supper
Ayrshire Association of Burns Clubs
Barr & District Burns Club
Barrmill Jolly Beggars B C
Cumnock Cronies Burns Club
Cumnock Jolly Beggars BC
Dailly Jolly Beggars
Dalry Burns Club
Dundonald Burns Club
Garnock Burns Club
Howff Burns Club (Kilmarnock)
Irvine Burns Club
Irvine Lasses Burns Club
Kilbirnie Rosebery Burns Club
Kilmarnock Burns Club
Kilwinning Burns Club

**Lamlash Burns Club**
Largs Cronies Burns Club
Largs St Columba Burns Supper
Lodge Royal Arch West Kilbride
Logangate Burns Club (Cumnock)
Lugton Burns Club
Mauchline Burns Club
New Cumnock Burns Club
Newmilns Burns Club
Prestwick Burns Club
Skelmorlie “Poosie Nansie’s” Burns Club
West Kilbride Burns Club

**Schools**
Ayr & District Youth RBC
Braehead PS
Beith Primary School
Burns Bains
Caledonia Primary School
Catrine Primary School
Dalry Primary School
Doon Academy Robert BC
Doonfoot PS Robert Burns Club
Girvan Academy
Holmston Primary School
Kyle Academy Robert BC
Kilmars Primary School
Loanhead Primary School
Mauchline Primary School
Muirkirk Primary School
New Cumnock Primary School
New Farm Primary School
Patma Primary School,
Sacred Heart Primary School
St Patrick’s Primary School
Sorn Primary School
Wellington School

**Dumfries & Galloway**
Annan Ladies Burns Club
Castle Douglas Burns Club
Dalbeattie & District Burns Club
Dumfries Burns Club
Dumfries Burns Howff Club
Dumfries Ladies Burns Club No. 1
Friends of Ellisland
Gatehouse of Fleet Burns Club
Hole I ‘The Wa’ Burns Club (Dumfries)
Kirkcudbright Burns Club
Langholm Ladies’ Burns Club
Newton Stewart Burns Club
Sanquhar Black Joan Club
Southern Scottish Counties Assoc.
St Michael’s Burns Club (Dumfries)
Stranraer & District Burns Club
Thornhill & District Burns Club
Wigtown Burns Club

Schools
Kirkinner Primary School

**Edinburgh & The Lothians**
Airts Burns Club (Prestonpans)
Armadale Bessie Burns Club
Balerno Burns Club
Edinburgh Burns Club
Edinburgh District BC Assoc
Faulhouse & Crofthead B C
Grants Braes Burns Club
Harburn Men’s Rural Institute Burns Club
Liberton “Top O’The Hill”
Marchbank Burns Club

Portobello Burns Club
Scottish Parliament No1 Burns Club
Seton Burns Club
Tranent 25 Burns Club
Thorntree Mystic Burns Club

Schools
George Watson’s College
Balgreen Primary School
Dean Park Primary School
Eddelston Primary School
Linlithgow Bridge Primary School
Simpsons Primary School
Tynewater Primary School
Winyknowe Primary School

**Glasgow**
Blane Valley Burns Club
Bridgeton Burns Club
Clarinda Burns Circle
Cotter’s Burns Club
Glasgow & District Burns Assoc
Glasgow Haggis Club
Lodge Robert Burns 440
Ouplaymuir Burns Club
Partick Burns Club
Sandyford (Glasgow) BC
Thistle Burns Club

Schools
Busby Primary School
Eaglesham Primary School
James Aiton Primary School
Kilbowie Primary School

**Renfrewshire**
Alamo Burns Club (Paisley)
Gourock Burns Club
Gourock Jolly Begggars
Greenock Burns Club
Kilbarchan U C Burns Society
Lodge Greenock St John’s No175
Paisley Burns Club
Renfrewshire Assoc of BC

Schools
Aileymill Primary School
Houston Primary School
Ralston Primary School
Ravenscraig Primary School
**Dumbarton, Argyll and Bute**
Alexandria Burns Club
Dumbarton Burns Club
Helensburgh Burns Club
Lochgoilhead Burns Club

Schools
Colquhoun Park Primary School
Craigdhu Primary School
Drymen Primary School
Whitecrook Primary School
St Machan’s Primary School

**Lanarkshire**
Airdrie Burns Club
Allanton Jolly Beggars BC
Cumbernauld & Kilsyth District BC
Hamilton Burns Club
Killbryde Burns Club
Lanarkshire Association of Burns Clubs
Larkhall Burns Club
Larkhall Prof & Businessmen
Lodge Blantyre Kilwinning
Ravenscraig Burns Club
Uddingston Masonic Burns Club
Whifflet Burns Club

Schools
Carbrain Primary School
Carluke Primary School
Long Calderwood Primary School
Newarthill Primary School

**Stirling, Clackmannan, & West Perthshire**
Ben Cleuch Burns Club (Tillicoultry)
Denny Cross Burns Club
Dollar Burns Club
Falkirk Burns Club
Friday Night B C, (Falkirk)
Greenloaning Burns Club
Higginsonneuk Burns Club
Morton Family Burns Club
Sauchie Burns Club
Stirling Burns Club
Stirling Clack & W Perth. Assoc
Wheatsheaf Burns Club (Falkirk)

Schools
Alva Primary School
Bainsford Primary School
Bantaskin Primary School
Deanburn Primary School
Dunblane Centre Youth BC
Strathdevon Primary School
Lauriston Primary School
Whitecross Primary School

**Fife**
Auchterderran Jolly Beggars BC
Balmullo Burns Club
Bowhill People’s BC (Cardenden)
Cupar Burns Club
Dunfermline United Burns Club
Earlsferry Burns Club
Fife Association of BC
Lodge Coupar o’Fife No 19 (Cupar)
Markinch Burns Club
Pittenweem Burns Club
St Andrews Burns Club
The Poosie Nansie Ladies BC (Kirkcaldy)

Schools
Auchtermuchty Primary School
Cairneyhill Primary School
Carleton Primary School
Coaltown of Balgownie School
Dulloch Primary School
Dunbog Primary School
Kennoway Primary & Community School
Letham Primary School
Park Road Primary School
Pitteuchar Primary School
South Park Primary School
Torbain Primary School

**Tayside**
Arbroath Burns Club
Burns Club of Abernethy
Dundee Burns Club
Kinross Jolly Beggars
Lodge Camperdown 317 (Dundee)
Montrose Burns Club
Perth Burns Club
Robert Burns Lodge of Dundee
Strathearn Burns Club
Schools
Aberenythy Primary School
Acrum Road Primary School
St Lukes & St Mathews PS
St Pius Academy
Strathcathro Primary School
Warddykes Primary School

Scottish Borders
Borders Association of BC
Coldstream Burns Club
Eyemouth Clachan Burns Club
Galashiels Burns Club
Hawick Burns Club
Kelso Burns Club
Peebles Burns Club

North of Scotland
Aberdeen Burns Club
Elgin Burns Club
Ellon Burns Club
Fettercairn Burns Club
Fraserburgh Burns Club
Inveraray Burns Club
Inverness Burns Club
Peterhead Burns Club
Rosehearty Burns Club
Stonehaven (Fatherland) BC
Strathpeffer Burns Club
The Enthusiasts Burns Club (Inverness)
The Stick Lum Street BC (Rosehearty)
Wester Ross Burns Club

New Deer Primary School
Ordiquhill Primary School
Port Erroll School

England - North
Barleycornians Burns Club (Blyth)
Barnsley & Dist Scot Soc
Burns Federation, Yorkshire
Caledonian Society of Sheffield
Caledonian Society of Doncaster
Chester Caledonian Association
Clumber BC
Corby Grampian Burns Club
Corby Stewarts & Lloyd’s BC
Durham & District Cal Soc
Huddersfield St Andrew Soc
Humberside Burns Soc
Grimsby & Dist Caledonian Society
St Andrew’s Soc of Bradford.
St Andrew Soc of York
Wakefield Cal. Soc.
Whiteadder Burns Club

England - Midlands
Birmingham & Midlands Scot Soc
Coventry Jolly Beggars Burns Club
Chesterfield & District Cal Assoc
Derby Scottish Assoc & Burns Club
Nottingham Scottish Assoc.
Leicester Caledonian Soc.
Tamworth & Dist Scottish Soc.
Walsall & Dist Scottish Soc.

London and South England
Burns Club of London
Cal Soc of Colchester & District
Caledonian Society of London
Caledonian Club Trust Ltd
Cheltenham Scottish Society
Dover & East Kent Scottish Society
Harrow & District Caledonian Soc
Herefordshire Burns Club
Robert Burns Clubs of Guildford
RT Burns Club (Dagenham)
Swindon & Dist Cal Soc
Ireland
Belfast Burns Association
The Dublin Burns Club

Rest of Europe
The Clansmen E.V.
Robert Burns Society, Austria
Robert Burns Society of Maastricht
The Scottish Society of Jersey

Schools
Kyiv School N.56
Junior Burns Club of Secondary School of
Plosk “Young Ukrainian Burnsians
State Secondary School No.606, St
Petersburg
Zalishchyky State Gimnasia, Ukraine

Rest of World
Auckland Robert Burns Association
Bendigo & Dist Caledonian Soc Inc
Buenos Aires Tartan Army
Burns Club of Launceston
Canberra Highland Society & Burns Club
Dubai Caledonian Society
Dunedin Burns Club
Fremantle Burns Club
Robert Burns Club of Melbourne
Robert Burns Assoc of the Pacific Rim.
Wanganui River City Robert Burns Club
Western Viti Levu (Fiji) Burns Club

Canada & U.S.A.
Ayr (Canada) Burns Society
Burns Club of Atlanta
Burns Club of Sarasota (FLa)
Burns Club of Vancouver
Burns Society of the City of New York
Calgary Burns Club
Detroit Burns Club
Edmonton Burns Club
Halifax Burns Club
Halton/Peel Burns Club
Heather & Thistle Society (Houston TX)
Medicine Hat Burns Club
Nanaimo Burns Club
Niagara Falls (Canada) BC
Ottawa Burns Club
Robert Burns Association of North America
Robert Burns Soc of Annapolis
Robert Burns Soc of Kilmarnock, Canada
Robert Burns Soc of Midlands(SC)
Schiehallion Scot Heritage Soc (AB)
Winnipeg Robert Burns Club

Non-Geographic Clubs
Association of Past Presidents
CICE’s Burns Club
Robert Burns Guild of Speakers
Robert Burns Guild of Performers
St Petersburg Forum
Scottish Fire & Rescue Services BC
Scottish Presidents’ Assoc (England)

236 no. Individual Members

77 no. Family Members
The Robert Burns World Federation.
(Formerly The Burns Federation)

Past Presidents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>President</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>President</th>
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<tr>
<td>1885-99</td>
<td>Ex Prov Peter Sturrock</td>
<td>1876-77</td>
<td>R A B McLaren</td>
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<td>1899-06</td>
<td>Ex Prov David Mackay</td>
<td>1877-78</td>
<td>A C W Train</td>
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<td>1906-07</td>
<td>David Murray MA, BSc</td>
<td>1878-79</td>
<td>Albert W Findlayson MA</td>
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<td>1908-09</td>
<td>William Wallace LLD</td>
<td>1879-80</td>
<td>Samuel K Gaw FSA Scot</td>
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<td>1909-10</td>
<td>Capt David Sneddon</td>
<td>1880-81</td>
<td>Mollie Rennie</td>
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<td>1910-23</td>
<td>Duncan McNaught LLD</td>
<td>1881-82</td>
<td>John Kidd JP</td>
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<td>1923-27</td>
<td>Sir Robert Bruce LLD</td>
<td>1882-83</td>
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<td>Sir Joseph Dobbie SSC</td>
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<td>T D McLlwrath</td>
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<td>1930-33</td>
<td>Sir Alexander Gibb GBE CB</td>
<td>1884-85</td>
<td>J M M Inglis</td>
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<td>1933-37</td>
<td>Ninian MacWhannel FRIBA</td>
<td>1995-96</td>
<td>Wilson Ogilvie MA FSA Scot</td>
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<td>1937-43</td>
<td>Matthew H McKerrow</td>
<td>1986-87</td>
<td>Dr Jim Connor</td>
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<td>1943-46</td>
<td>John S Clarke</td>
<td>1987-88</td>
<td>Enez Logan</td>
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<td>1946-48</td>
<td>Sir P J Dollar DL</td>
<td>1988-89</td>
<td>Anne Gaw</td>
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<td>1948-50</td>
<td>Thomas B Goudie</td>
<td>1989-90</td>
<td>H B Sneddon CBE</td>
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<td>1950-51</td>
<td>John McVie</td>
<td>1990-91</td>
<td>B Campbell</td>
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<td>1951-52</td>
<td>James R Crawford</td>
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<td>Donald R Urquhart</td>
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<td>1953-54</td>
<td>John W Oliver</td>
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<td>A Wilson Boyle</td>
<td>1994-95</td>
<td>David Smith</td>
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<td>1956-57</td>
<td>Alex MacMillan</td>
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<td>Andrew J McKee</td>
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<td>1957-58</td>
<td>James B Hardie</td>
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<td>1959-60</td>
<td>Fred J Belford MA</td>
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<td>1960-61</td>
<td>Andrew Stenhouse</td>
<td>2000-01</td>
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<td>1961-62</td>
<td>H G McKerrow</td>
<td>2001-02</td>
<td>James Gibson</td>
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<td>Anderson Wilson</td>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>James Robertson</td>
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<td>W J King-Gillies</td>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>H Wilson Logan</td>
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<td>1965-66</td>
<td>Dr S Montgomerie</td>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>Maj (retd) John G. Paterson</td>
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<td>1966-67</td>
<td>G. Vallance</td>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>Angus Middleton</td>
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<td>1967-68</td>
<td>Dr I Taylor</td>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>John Haining</td>
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<td>1968-69</td>
<td>Robert Donaldson</td>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>Bill Dawson</td>
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<td>1969-70</td>
<td>Daniel McIldowie</td>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>Wg Cmdr (retd) Mike Duguid</td>
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<td>1970-71</td>
<td>Mrs Jane Burgoyne MA</td>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>B David Baird</td>
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<td>1971-72</td>
<td>Matthew McLauchlan</td>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>Jim Shields</td>
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<td>1972-73</td>
<td>Charles C Easton FSA</td>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>Robert W M Stewart</td>
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<td>1973-74</td>
<td>Thomas Anderson</td>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>Jane Brown</td>
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<td>1975-76</td>
<td>James E Inglis</td>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>Dr Peter T Hughes OBE</td>
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The mission of the Chronicle remains the furtherance of knowledge about Robert Burns and its publication in a form that is both academically responsible and clearly communicated for the broader Burnsian community.

Bill Dawson
EDITOR

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