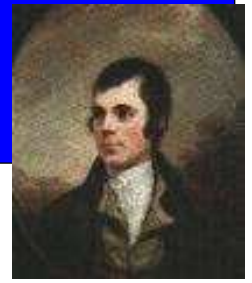


# The RBANA Tattler



## Officers and Directors:

President	Chrys Ballantyne
Vice - President	Colin Harris
Secretary/Treasurer	Ron Ballantyne
Past President	Frank Campbell
US Director	Robert Boyd Kathleen McGlew Jock Smith
Canadian Director	Tony Grogan Don Rennicks Scott Reid
Hon Presidents	May Crawley Canadian Director, Robert Burns World Federation  Jack Mann

## Contacts:

Editor:  
Colin Harris  
92 Avalon Rd  
Winnipeg MB  
R2M 2L5  
amansaman@hotmail.ca

## Editor Emeritus:

Frank Campbell  
3743 Whitecap Dr  
Innisfil ON  
L9S 2L4  
therewasalad@earthlink.net

## Secretary:

Ron Ballantyne  
3214 Spruce Ave  
Burlington ON  
L7N 1J2  
btsenr@cogeco.ca

The Robert Burns Association of North America.  
Club # 1024

Affiliated with the Robert Burns World Federation  
Ltd.  
Kilmarnock, Scotland.



## Words from the President

As I write this most of us will have put our annual Burns' Suppers behind us. We have a number of Supper reports posted on the website and look forward to receiving the rest.



I received a delightful e-mail from Andrew Thompson, Public Relations Officer of the South Lanarkshire Council. It contained 3 links to performances of Burns' poems and songs by primary school pupils competing for the Bridgeton Burns Club Competition for schools.

To see and hear these children brought a smile to my face. You will agree that "Burns is alive and well" in the voices of these talented children.

The latest update to the website is a most exciting one and the latest information and registration package for the upcoming RBANA 2011 Conference in May is now added to the "NEXT CONFERENCE" page.

I encourage everyone to seriously consider coming to Winnipeg. The fellowship with other Burnsians is great and the widening of our circle of friends is stimulating.

There have also been several news items of great interest and these have been posted in the 'NEWS' section of the web page. There is the investigation into the much acclaimed account, touted by so many Scottish politicians, that Andrew Carnegie had required a bust of Burns to be prominently mounted in all the libraries he financed. Yet why can none be found? Check the report, which has also been published in the

## In This Issue

Words from the President .....	1
RBANA 2011 .....	2
Supper Reports.....	2
Fredericton Statue Saved .....	4
Burns An Ethical Problem .....	5
Carnegie Library Myth .....	7
Unpublished Letter Found .....	9
Burns Space Odyssey .....	10
University awarded grant .....	11

Winter 'Burns Chronicle' and is also featured in this edition of the Tattler. You may have missed the report in the January update, where RBANA was involved in persuading the Fredericton NB council to restore the Burns Statue in the city to its pedestal. The flurry of reaction to the negative decision and the national attention from our intervention prompted members from the Irving family to offered funds for the restitution. There are reports and a video of the recent discovery of two previously unknown letters written by Burns and also an early manuscript, in Burns handwriting, of the poem 'The Wounded Hare'.

*Your friendship, sir, I winna quat it,  
An' if ye mak objections at it,  
Then hand in neive some day we'll knot it,  
An' witness take,  
An' when wi' usquabae we've wat it  
It winna break.*

Third Epistle to J. Lapraik; Robert Burns

# RBANA CONFERENCE



# 2011

As announced at the Detroit Conference, the historic Marlborough Hotel in downtown Winnipeg, is the site for **31<sup>st</sup> Annual General Meeting and Conference** of the Robert Burns Association of North America (RBANA). Hosted by the Winnipeg Robert Burns Club **RBANA 2011** will be held the weekend of May 13-15.



The hosts have arranged accommodation rates starting at \$77.00 (Canadian \$) per room per night. Please book your room directly through the hotel at

[www.themarlbrough.ca](http://www.themarlbrough.ca)

or by phone at 1 800 667 7666—When booking please quote **CODE RBA**

The conference fee, which includes dinners on Friday and Saturday, and breakfast Saturday and Sunday, is \$170.00

As is our custom, the weekend will officially commence with the Friday evening dinner and Ceilidh - so prepare

your favourite party piece.

Saturday morning will see the RBANA AGM, followed, in the afternoon, by the seminars, and, of course, the annual Dr Jim Connor Memorial Quiz.

The Saturday night dinner, will take the form of a Winnipeg Robert Burns Supper, with all the usual toasts and local entertainment.

The Sunday morning worship service is planned for Knox United Church, with a church parade led by the pipes leaving from the hotel.

For the golfers, a tee time of 9:00 Friday morning is arranged at the Players Course at a cost of \$18.00 (\$17.00 for those over 55 years of age) and \$18.00 for the rental of a cart (\$4.50 per golfer if 4 share).

Registration forms for RBANA 2011 are available on the RBANA website [www.rbana.com](http://www.rbana.com) or directly from the club by contacting

[winnipegrobertburnsclub@gmail.com](mailto:winnipegrobertburnsclub@gmail.com)

## Reports from the Clubs - Erie

On Saturday, January 29, 2011 the Erie Maennerchor Club ballroom was abuzz with kilted ladies and gents, chatting and enjoying a wee dram with one another.

It was the start of another successful Burns Supper in Erie, Pennsylvania. Over 100 guests gathered to enjoy a wonderful meal and, of course, a taste of haggis.

Since bringing haggis over the border from Canada is a “no-no”, a local Erie butcher, Jerry Urbaniak, now makes our delicious haggis, which is as close to authentic as you can get!!

Dr. Timothy Thompson, of Edinboro, Pennsylvania, delivered the Address to the Haggis with his usual aplomb, much to everyone’s delight. The haggis was piped in by D.J. Flaherty and the Master of Ceremonies, Captain Eric Marshall, USN (retired),

“paid the piper his due”. {right}

Following the meal, former board member Anne Davis, now a resident of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania delivered the Immortal Memory.

She shared interesting highlights of Burns’ life and works.

The guests were entertained by students of the Anita Mountain School of Highland Dance, along with leader, Anita Mountain.

Another treat for everyone was the playing of a selection of Scottish tunes by a young fiddler, Scott Taylor.

To finish off the evening, many of the guests participated in the dancing of some of their favorite Scottish country dances – with great gusto!!

Co-President Christine Detar was pleased with the evening’s festivities, and is already planning next year’s event!!

Submitted by Sheila Campbell Sweet, Co-President



## Reports from the Clubs - Halton Peel

The Halton Peel club holds its members-only Supper on our usual meeting night, the last Friday of the month, this year on January 28th. As we have done for several years, we met in the home of Doreen & Dr. Bob Ritchie. This setting provides everyone the opportunity to participate in a family type atmosphere. This was our 9th supper.



Pierre Arnold kept the evening moving smoothly as M.C.

Bob Ritchie piped in the haggis carried by Ron Ballantyne. The Address to the Haggis was given by Ronnie O'Byrne, in great style. The meal was then served, following the traditional

menu, preceded by Burns' graces by Alan & Susan McKenzie. The Toast to 'Our Two Lands' was ably delivered by Janet Orwin.

The 'Toast to the Lassies' by Jim Steel and the 'Reply' by club President Chrys Ballantyne, were recited amusingly in verse.

Ronnie O'Byrne gave us an inspiring Immortal Memory, (below) with a very personal touch, telling how Burns had influenced his life and work.

The evening continued as a ceilidh, with music on fiddle & bodrum, songs and recitations from members.

Altogether a great evening was enjoyed by all.



## Reports from the Clubs - Parry Sound

The planning of the Parry Sound Burns Supper was put in abeyance in the Fall of 2010 due to a conflicting requirement imposed by the preferred venue, where the event was held in 2010.

However an alternative arrangement was arrived at by combining with the Parry Sound, Royal Canadian Legion, Pioneer Branch 117.

The Robbie Burns Supper was held on Saturday, January 29<sup>th</sup>. The evening began at 5 p.m. with 110 people attending all in appropriate dress with Tartan, creating a most colourful event.

The Haggis was ceremoniously piped into the by Donald Sanderson, CEO of the West Parry Sound Health Centre accompanied by the Members of the Haggis Party.

The "Address to The Haggis" was delivered by John Macfie (right) with much passion and gusto!

It was declared 'a guid haggis,' made by Jim Macfie with loving care!



A wee Dram was then enjoyed by the Piper, with Jim Macfie the Sergeant at Arms, John Macfie, Andy Milne and Bert Frederico in the accompanying party. (below)

Several toasts were made: to the Queen, The Lassie & Others. The traditional Robbie Burns Supper followed with Haggis, Roast Beef, Tatties, Neeps and then deliciously trifles, abundantly prepared by the Royal Canadian Legion Members.



A Scottish sing-song of the well known "Burns" songs was enjoyed by all.

Members of the Macfie Family entertained; playing the piano and fiddles and toes were a tapping! A lovely Burns Evening was enjoyed by all

*Submitted by: Mary Jane Zisoff*



## Reports from the Clubs - Winnipeg

More than 100 attended the 104th Annual Burns Supper at the Marlborough Hotel. Following the opening ceremonies, which included the singing of the National Anthem, introduction of the President's Table, Grace, and a Toast to Absent Friends, the guests enjoyed a hot bowl of Scotch Broth.

Following the soup, Piper Kirby McRae led in the Haggis Procession. Greg & Lynette Buchanan bore the haggis in the regimental style (right) that has become club tradition followed by Secretary, and Supper Committee Chair Colin Harris, who, for the first time in public, gave the Address to a Haggis, to much acclaim.



Prior to the desert service, guest entertainer Ronnie O'Byrne performed Son of Mar, from The Jolly Beggars, accompanied on the Bodran by club member John Madden. Following a post dinner interval, and Colin Harris bringing "Greetings Frae Ither Clubs" Ronnie returned to perform "Such A Parcel of Rogues in a Na-

tion, again accompanied by John Madden. I P P Roy McLeod Toasted Canada prior to Craig Oliphant humorously toasting the L:assies, to which his wife Carla replied. The Winnipeg Burns Club Men's Chorus took centre stage to perform Scot's Wha' Hae and A Man's A Man before Compere John Perrin introduced special guest for the evening Dr Archie McNicol, Membership Chair of the St Andrew's Society, who suitably Toasted The Immortal Memory.



The Men's Chorus returned, to accompany Ronnie O'Byrne for the Star of Rabbie Burns before Ronnie presented Holy Willie's Prayer.

President Lawrence Cormack made brief remarks of welcome and thanks before Ronnie O'Byrne presented a well received PowerPoint accompanied recitation of Scot's Wha Hae. A brief interval was followed by the door prize and raffle draws, with several guests winning prizes.

The evening ended in the traditional manner with the singing of Auld Lang Syne and the Royal Anthem.

## Reports from the Clubs - Nanaimo

Nanaimo Burns Club, held their Burns Supper on the 25th of Jan. at the Qualicum Beach Golf Club on Vancouver Island with 64 in attendance.

Our President Ron Bannister duly welcomed everybody {at the right}.

Then our M/C Bob McWhirter called for the Haggis to be duly piped in by our trusty piper John Reid. The Address to the Haggis was delivered by Bill Joss.

After that we sat down to the traditional three course meal, Soup, Roast, Dessert & coffee. Following dinner the men's choir sang the "Star of Rabbie Burns" {below}.

An Immortal memory was then proposed by Past President Bob Burns.

The toast to the Lasses & the Reply was given by by Ron & Maggie Bannister.



## Fredericton Statue Saved

Quite by coincidence the RBANA President Chrys Ballantyne chose a photo of the Fredericton statue of Robert Burns as the feature on her Seasons Greeting sent to RBANA members and Burnsian friends World Wide. In 2008 the statue had been removed for cleaning and repair, which has been done, but the pedestal was discovered to be compromised due to the repeated flooding from the St John River, on the bank of which the statue has stood for 100 years. A recently elected City Council had decided they would not pay for the rework and necessary relocation of the pedestal and statue and suggested it was up to the Scottish community to provide the funding for the maintenance of this work of art.



The local Scottish Community had been lobbying for 3 years to have the statue remounted but were having no success.

With the latest Council decision they were "up-in-arms" about the failure to acknowledge their respon-

Continued page 8

*The December edition of the Tattler carried an article, reprinted by Burns Club of Atlanta member George McClellan (FSA Scot), with his kind permission, from the Atlanta club's newsletter. The following is the conclusion of his Burns and Clarinda saga.*

## Burns — An Ethical Problem

Burns faced an ethical problem indeed. The once again pregnant Jean, who Burns loved although he refused to admit it, had in his absence, been cast out by her parents for the harlot they believed her to be. In their eyes, she was now Burns' responsibility and he had to provide for her. That was the situation in Mauchline. Our dear Robert, on the other hand, was infatuated with the lovely and charming Mrs. McLehose of Potter Row, Edinburgh, who had captured his heart both romantically and intellectually as Jean never could. She was his immediate and pressing challenge; but alas, the more pressing problems sixty miles south of Edinburgh could not be ignored. So, with a sadden heart away he went, back to Mauchline to confront the reality of his life.

Burns had to once again face Jean's angry parents but they were steadfast. She was now his and no amount of begging, pleading or cajoling could alter their Calvinist determination that she was no longer welcome in their home. That was final although Jeans mother was convinced by Burns to stand by her daughter. In desperation Burns did find a grim little place for Jean to live in the village, a squalid upstairs room of a house overlooking a doctors shop and the Kirkyard.

Clearly, Burns was confused in his deeper feelings. in the final paragraph of his letter to Ainslie pertaining to Jeans situation, Burns had written: "*Jean I found banished like a martyr - forlorn, destitute and friendless; all for the good old cause, I have reconciled her to her mother; I have taken a room for her; I have bought her a mahogany bed; I have given her a guinea and I have taken her in my arms...*"

Young Ainslie was quite aware of the involvement of his friend Burns with Nancy McLehose but was confused by that final paragraph of the letter Burns had sent to him The letter Burns wrote began: "*I have been prudent and cautious to a degree and I have sworn her privately and solemnly never to attempt any claim, which she has not, neither during my life nor after my death...*" Jean apparently had agreed but she was so deeply in love with him and dependent upon him that she would have, one supposes, agreed to anything.

Ainslie, on the other hand, was seeing a good deal of the plump and fetching Mrs. McLehose. Apparently, however, Nancy was besotted by Burns and desperate that his absence,

attending to his new responsibilities, might "wean him away from her permanently." She was impatient for his return (to Edinburgh) and hungered for news of him. Gasp! Oh, be still my beating heart! The faithful Ainslie maintained communications between them. Nancy had complained she had received but one letter from Burns since he left her, which anxiety Ainslie duly passed on to Burns. In reply, an equally desperate Burns wrote Ainslie to "*Tell her I wrote her from Glasgow, from Kilmarnock,, from Mauchline, and yesterday from Cumnock as I returned from Dumfries.*" Burns also included this little piece, apparently for Nancy's eyes only: "*I, this morning called on a certain woman, I am disgusted—with her; I cannot endure her! I, while my heart smote me for the profanity, tried to compare her with my Clarinda: t'was setting the expiring glimmer of a farthing taper beside the cloudless glory of the meridian sun. Here was tasteless insipidity, vulgarity of soul and mercenary fawning, there, polished good sense, heaven born genius and the most generous, the most delicate, the most tender passion. I have done with her and she with me...*"



"Of course he was talking about Jean. Nancy responded with a curt

but blistering letter accusing him of fickleness to which Burns responded : "*Clarinda, I have been so stung with your reproach for unkindness, a sin so unlike me, a sin I detest more then the whole Decalogue, that I could not rest in my grave about it were I to die before I see you. Was it not blasphemy against your own charms and against my feelings to suppose that a short fortnight could abate my passion? You, my love, may have your cares and anxieties to disturb you but they are the usual affaires of life; your future is fixed and your mind is a settled routine. Could you not, my ever dearest Madam,*



*make a little allowance for a man, after a long absence paying a short visit to a country full of friends, relatives and early intimates? Cannot you guess, my Clarinda, what thoughts, what cares, what anxious forebodings, hopes and fears must crown the breast of a man when no less than his whole future employment and very existence are at stake?"* Now, you've got to admit, this guy was really good!

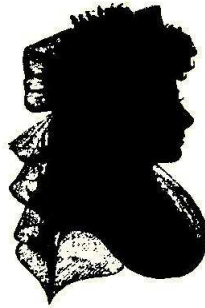
Prior to his departure back to the country, their blossoming relationship threw Nancy into confusion. Her passions were Prior to his departure back to the country, their blossoming relationship threw Nancy into confusion. Her passions were in a turmoil of their own. At first she reveled in his company and understood the necessity for

Continued next page

## Burns — An Ethical Problem (continued)

discretion, but he didn't. Confused about her feelings and hearing rumors and gossip starting to form around her about her relationship with Burns, she sought to advise him to cool his ardor. In his letters during the Clarinda - Sylvander period, Burns used words like "love" and she advised him not to, suggesting instead to substitute terms like "esteem". Burns responded by asking how he could be expected to substitute "esteem" for "love", saying that "*Love is like adding cream to strawberries. It not only gives the fruit more elegant richness but has a peculiar deliciousness of its own.*" He was good!

His beguiling logic was hard to resist and she was slowly, maybe quickly, succumbing. Nancy was plagued with headaches (from lack of sleep) and becoming uneasy about how the relationship was "ripening." Her conscience was bothering her and in desperation she turned to her church and sought the advice of the Reverend Mr. Kemp of the Tolbooth Kirk, an Old Lights Calvinist. He naturally advised her ecclesiastically and when she suggested they should be seen attending the kirk together, Burns' contempt for the righteous kirk and its probing investigations and sinister insinuations came out. He refused saying she, Clarinda, "*was making mountains out of molehills*". He did tell her however, that she alone "*should decide where the line of discretion should be drawn*" and that he would be guided by her wishes. Then he returned to Mauchline.



Ainslie fulfilled his mission. Nancy Mclehorse knew about Jean and was afraid that with Jean, whose undoubted charms she feared might enchain him, that Burns would be lost to her forever. But, Nancy had ethical chains of her own. Her status as a married woman, like an albatross around her neck, arrested her passionate desires to give herself to him totally. Nancy also knew that Jean was pregnant and even dispatched baby clothing as a present for baby Robert at Mossgiel.

Recognizing Nancy's torment, and becoming irritated by them, Burns added to her discomfort by suggesting she should sue for dissolution of her marriage. Counsel from the good and wise Reverend Kemp, however, who had a word in her ear from time to time, squashed any such ideas. Further complicating matters for Burns were the other actions taking place on his behalf in Edinburgh.

Friends were attempting to find him a situation with the Excise Service where candidates had to be above reproach in matters of their domestic affairs. His relations with Nancy, so far, had failed to result in the physical conquest he desired and she still was ripe for the plucking despite her religious scruples. While Jean had freely given him her favors, Clarinda, still, had not. In the meantime, Jean's twin girls were born then died and were buried in the Mauchline Kirk's cemetery without having been christened and without bearing Burns' name. They were considered as illegitimate. Mauchline was suddenly inhospitable to Robert Burns and he decided to return to the bewitching arms of his Clarinda, to have another go!

### Reports from the Clubs - The St Andrew Society of Sarasota

103 people gathered at the Venice Yacht Club on Saturday, January 22nd to celebrate the 252nd Anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns. We were all happy to see Frank Campbell, our President who had made the trip back from Canada, where he had been convalescing at his son's place, as well as long time members Ralph and Jan Conner who have moved to New Mexico.

The Address to the Haggis was given by Joe Pierce (right) and the Immortal Memory by Diane Gilbert-Madsen. Diane a published author is



the first woman to give the Immortal Memory in the 32 year history of the St. Andrew Society of Sarasota. M.C. Jim Martin kept everyone laughing and baritone Douglas Renfroe wrapped up the evening with several Burns and Scottish songs. Tony Stuart and Anne Stuart were recognized for their long time support of Robert Burns with a plaque for Tony and red roses for Anne. Everyone had a great time and left with their spirits lifted by a night of fun and fellowship.

David MacMillan, Secretary



Frank Campbell recites  
"Parcel o' Rogues"

# Did Andrew Carnegie require a Bust of Burns in all his funded libraries, An Investigation

The Winter Edition of the Burns Chronicle includes an article by RBANA Secretary-Treasurer Ron Ballantyne on the oft told tale of libraries funded by Andrew Carnegie and his Foundation requiring to display a bust of Robert Burns.

With Ron's kind permission, we include a summary of that article in the Tattler.

Some websites claim that 3460 libraries funded by Andrew Carnegie were required to have a bust of Robert Burns Prominently displayed. Actually there were only 2509 libraries funded by the Carnegie Foundation world-wide.

I was preparing a presentation on Burns Statues etc. for the Halton Peel Burns Club and decided to add a photo on one of these busts.

Thomas Keith wrote an article in the 2001 Burns Chronicle "Burns Statues in North America-a Survey". In it there is this quote, "Andrew Carnegie commissioned [Charles] Calverley to sculpt an heroic bust of Burns (shown right) which was then reproduced and placed prominently inside every Carnegie library funded throughout the United States (Burnsiana, p. 47).

The reference is incorrect and Thomas told me the source was from James Mackay's 1992 "Biography of Burns". It is also mentioned in "Dirt & Deity" by Ian Macintyre (1995) and in "Pride & Passion" by Gavin Sprott (1996). To find a bust I first approached Carnegie Libraries in the Greater Toronto area. None were aware of such a requirement. I was referred to the librarian at Guelph University who runs a blog-site 'Libraries Today' He also was unaware of the requirement but referred me to Columbia University who hold all the records of the Carnegie Foundation.

They replied that "We could not find any references to a mandatory Burns bust display".

I contacted the Pittsburgh library, where Carnegie made his fortune, surely they would have a Burns bust.

Again the reply, "there was nothing in any of the records we hold that substantiates the premise".

I visited the Dunfermline Library, Carnegie's first, but the only bust of Burns they have was acquired 30 years after the library's founding in 1883.

I later came across a book "The Best Gift: A Record of

the Carnegie Libraries in Ontario".

This book documents the founding correspondence and early history of 111 libraries in Ontario. It makes no mention of Robert Burns, or any reference to a Burns bust being required. It includes a copy of the "Resolution to accept the donation from Andrew Carnegie" In that document there is no mention of a bust of Robert Burns.

Another book from 1917, 'A Book of Carnegie Libraries' by Theodore Wesley Koch makes no mention of Burns or of busts.

Two biographies of Andrew Carnegie mention his love of Burns but make no mention of requiring busts of Burns to be placed in his libraries.

Quite apart from the lack of documentary evidence, there are practical implications.

The Calverley bust of Burns is considered one of the artist's major works. A copy donated by Carnegie is in the New York Metropolitan Museum of the Arts. This is a second casting. Had there been multiple copies, they would have been recorded by the Museum and in the Inventory of American Sculpture.

They are not. It was valued at the equivalent of \$25,500 in 2010. Such a high cost of these busts would have been a burden on the small community libraries.

Many turned down funding, because of the tax implications.

A bust would have been an added obligation. Carnegie refused to provide a free photograph of himself when requested.

Mackay refers to the story in his 1992

"Biography of Robert Burns" (p. 688):- "At one time every Carnegie library in the United States had its obligatory bust of Burns, some 3,460 in all – but this was done away with in the 1950s"

This appears to be the earliest reference to the story in print. Mackay does not identify his sources, or how the number 3460 came about, or why the "change" in the 1950s, unlike his other extensive source citations.

In 2009 at the Robert Burns World Federation conference in Edinburgh, after the Scottish Minister of Culture had quoted the story, I happened to mention in the hearing of Professor David Purdie, Editor of the Burns Encyclopaedia, that I considered the tale was an urban myth. He reacted rather strongly, was obviously convinced of the veracity of the story & assured me in an email that:- "{He} had a word with a friend with the Carnegie Foundation who confirmed that in each 'Deed' executed on behalf of Carnegie, for the foundation of his 3000! libraries, it was an absolute specification that each should exhibit a bust of Burns and



Continued next page

## Carnegie Library Myth continued

contain a copy of his *Collected Works*".

This statement does not accord with the foregoing facts. As noted above, the 'grant acceptance document', which must

be the 'Deed' referred to, contains no reference to a Burns Bust. It does however indicate the origin of the widely accepted story

Based on this investigation one can only conclude that the 'story' about placing busts of Robert Burns in all libraries funded by Andrew Carnegie is an Urban Myth.

## Reports from the Clubs - The Heather & Thistle Society of Houston

The Society's 58<sup>th</sup> Annual Burns Supper & Ball was held in the Crowne Plaza Hotel Houston on January 29<sup>th</sup>. There were about 300 members and guests in attendance. The chairman for the evening was the current Chieftain of the Society, Melvyn Douglass *FSA Scot*.

The haggis was addressed by Robert Gilbert, a Past Chieftain of the Society.

The Immortal memory was delivered by Dr. Tony Grogan of the Winnipeg, Canada Burns Club. (right) Tony is a Director of the Robert Burns Association of North America, and a Winter Texan with a home near McAllen. During the evening Ted Hirtz was awarded the Jack and Phemia Hume trophy for service to the Burns



Club

The entertainment for the evening was provided by two pipe bands -the Houston Highlanders and St Thomas Episcopal School. The dancers were from the same school.

The Houston Branch of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society also provided a demonstration.

In the afternoon of 30<sup>th</sup> January, 25 of the Club members gathered at the Robert Burns Memorial Bust in the Hermann Park Rose Garden for a short ceremony, to celebrate the birth of Robert Burns. Following the brief ceremony, led by Jack Hume (below) the group repaired to a local Pub. There the Burns Club put on a presentation, and held a Scottish Trivia Quiz



## Fredericton Statue Saved continued

sibilities.

The appeals were fronted by Daniel Taylor past President of the New Brunswick's Scottish Cultural Association. This man was also responsible for persuading the Canadian Government to finally declare April 6<sup>th</sup> as Tartan Day. Daniel sent out an appeal to Scottish Cultural Associations to support their pleas to the Fredericton Council.

Your Secretary, Ron Ballantyne, was asked by President Chrys and the RBANA executive to respond to this appeal and there was ongoing communication.

Since the image of the statue had been sent far and wide,

weeks previously, Ron sent the same greetings card to each of the Councilors, pointing out the ridiculous situation they had created in the eyes of the world. This information was passed by Daniel to the local press and TV and there was a flurry of attention given to the issue.

On January 12<sup>th</sup> Mr. & Mrs. J.K. Irving, came forward and generously offered to provide the funds to complete the re-mounting of the statue.

Dan Taylor sent a letter of appreciation to RBANA for the support they received.

# Unpublished 1789 letter & original manuscript of a poem in Burns handwriting recently discovered

**This news item was received from Professor David Purdie the Editor of the Burns Encyclopaedia and Secretary of the Edinburgh Burns club.**



Mrs Anne Hunter, the wife of the famous Scots surgeon and anatomist John Hunter. A minor poet whose work is little known now, she achieved local celebrity for her lyrics some of which were set to music by Haydn during his stay in London. Anyone familiar with Burns' acute sense of humour, however, will spot the dry irony with which

**O**n 10th January 2011 in company with Dr Iain Gordon Brown of the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh, I examined a letter and manuscript at Floors Castle, in the Scottish Borders. We confirmed to the owner, the 10th Duke of Roxburghe, that the letter was an unpublished work of Burns, the poem being an early draft of a work published in 1793: 'On seeing a wounded Hare'

*Ellisland near Dumfries 13th May 1789*

*Sir,*

*I beg your pardon for not returning Mrs Hunter's poem sooner. The fact is, I did not wish to send it till I could accompany it with something of my own, not indeed as a reward for, but as a mark of my sense of your goodness. In the inclosed piece I have at least attempted to catch a little of Mrs Hunter's spirit. If you could spare a leisure moment to mark the faulty lines with your pencil, and give the bagatelle, so corrected, to Peter Hill, Bookseller, it will reach me & lay me under an additional [obligation] to you. I have received so many oblidging instances of your attention both to the poet & his works, that to trouble you with a tedious apology for this freedom would be affectation. As for your abilities as a Critic, I am in the predicament of the devils, "I believe & tremble."*

*I have the honor to be,*

*Sir, your deeply indebted humble Servt Robert Burns.*

Thus wrote Scotland's greatest poet and songwriter to one of the greatest physicians of the Age of Enlightenment. The letter which has come to light at Floors castle is the only one known to have been written by Burns to Prof. Gregory and is highly illustrative of several aspects of the poet's life and work.

Burns had clearly received from Gregory some poetry by

he assures Gregory that he has tried to catch 'a little of Mrs Hunter's spirit' in his own work. At first sight it may seem odd that an established and famous poet should submit new work for criticism by Edinburgh University's Professor of Medicine and head of the city's great medical school. Burns, however, had a high regard for Gregory and often sent new works to men whom he rated as literary critics - although very rarely accepting the advice offered. On the advice of the historian Prof. Alexander Fraser Tytler, he did take out four lines from Tam o' Shanter mercilessly flaying the lawyers and the clergy, while the respected divine Dr Hugh Blair of St Giles managed to effect only a one-word change to The Holy Fair, Burns' great satire on hellfire open-air preaching. Other Edinburgh literati to whom the poet sent work for comment included Andrew Dalzell, Professor of Greek at the University and of course James Gregory. The latter, a man of seismic personality, was perhaps best summed up by Lord Cockburn as: 'a curious and excellent man, a great physician, a great Lecturer, a great Latin scholar and a great talker, vigorous and generous, large of stature and with a strikingly powerful countenance'. He was treated warily by Burns who lamented to the philosopher Prof. Dugald Stewart that, as a critic: 'Gregory is a good man, but he crucifies me!' Indeed the Floors letter ends humorously with the poet quoting from the New Testament (James 2:19) to the effect that, like the Devil, he believes and trembles when faced with Gregory as a critic. The two men, if not close personal friends, clearly had a warm regard for each other. Burns was the recipient from Gregory of eight volumes of Cicero's Select Orations edited by William Duncan, the poet inscribing it: 'a present from the truly worthy and learned Dr Gregory. I shall preserve it to my latest hour, as a mark of the gratitude, esteem, and veneration I bear the Donor.'

Continued next page

## Unpublished letter discovered - continued

So help me God!

On Sunday 19 April 1789, Scotland's greatest poet and songwriter was out early on his farm by the river Nith, sowing grass seed. The thirty year-old Robert Burns, tenant of Ellisland farm in lower Nithsdale, some six miles north of Dumfries, had just moved his wife Jean Armour and their 18 month old son Robert Jr. into the newly rebuilt farmhouse. Walking the field and scattering seed from his sowing sheet, Burns heard the report of a shot from a neighbouring plantation and, as he later wrote to a friend, 'shortly afterwards, a poor little wounded hare came crippling by me.'

Enraged that a doe hare should have been hunted and shot in mid-April when their leverets are newly born, Burns left his sowing and went hunting himself. He soon caught up with the huntsman who turned out to be James Thomson, the son of a neighbouring farmer. Burns was never to describe the confrontation which followed; but Thomson was never to forget it. Decades later, the poet's biographer Allan Cunningham interviewed the now middle-aged farmer

who clearly remembered the incident as if it were yesterday. Burns, he recalled: ' was in great wrath, and cursed me, and said little hindered him from throwing me into the Nith; and he was able enough to do it, though I was both young and strong.'

Burns had an abiding affection for the animal and plant life which surrounded him in his early years. All his life he was opposed to hunting for sport and had a remarkably modern and inclusive approach to what he called 'nature's social union' some two centuries before the emerging concept of the ecosystem.

'The Wounded Hare' is thus seen to lie at the heart of one of the poet's great leitmotifs; the defence of living creatures no match for the power of Man.

The Floors manuscript of the poem and the letter to Gregory will go on display when the Castle opens to the public, and now take their place alongside the 720 known letters of Burns and the 630 works which stand to the name of a man who was gone at 37 leaving a body of song and poetry which will remain always as one of Scotland's greatest literary achievements.

Prof. D.W.R. Purdie MD FRCP Ed FRSSA FSA(Scot)

## Burns poetry returns from a Space Odyssey

In February 2010 a miniature book of Burns' poetry, which is less than one-inch high, was taken on onboard the space shuttle Endeavour on a two-week mission to the International Space Station, by British astronaut Nick Patrick. During the visit it completed a 5.7 million-mile trip and 217 Earth orbits.

The book was originally provided to the Space School by Alan Archibald of the Department of Electronic & Electrical Engineering, who is a distant relative of Burns' wife Jean Armour. The tiny book was taken to the NASA Johnson Space Center in Texas by 10 Scottish high school students taking part in the Scottish Space School, operated by Strathclyde University, to encourage school pupils to

pursue careers in science and engineering.

The pupils handed the book to Nick Patrick in November 2009 during their visit.

On 16th June 2010 the tiny book was returned to Scotland and was presented to First Minister Alex Salmond by astronaut Nick Patrick at Holyrood. (below) Nick said: "It

was a real honour to have met such an enthusiastic group of young people, not only to continue the inspirational work

undertaken by the Scottish Space School, but to also help spread the timeless poetry of Robert Burns."



Continued next page

## Space Odyssey continued

In response Alex Salmond said "I am delighted that the ten Scottish Space School pupils had such a successful visit to NASA, where they also helped make a little history. Robert Burns' works have a truly global reach so it is entirely

fitting that following the successful Year of Homecoming his poetry has literally travelled around the world on the mission to the International Space Station."

The book contains a small fragment of Jean Armour's wedding dress and is now displayed in the Burns Museum in Alloway which had an official opening on December 1st and will open it's doors to the public sometime in January. {See the article in the December Tattler}

## University awarded £1m grant for book project

**G**lasgow University's Centre for Robert Burns Studies has been given £1,000,000 to produce the first, complete, scholarly edition of the works of Robert Burns.

The Arts and Humanities Research Council will fund the project, which will see six volumes published over the next 8 years, with another six to follow in the next decade. The volumes will include the Oxford Handbook to Robert Burns and the Collected Prose of Robert Burns.

The award follows an Oxford University Press contract Glasgow University secured two years ago to produce the work.

Dr Gerry Carruthers, (right) a leading Burns expert will lead a team of five literary scholars on the project— Editing Robert Burns for the 21st Century.

It is hoped that the first volume will be ready for publication in late 2012.

