

Calgary Claver

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Gentlemen,

This is my last report of the Calgary Burns Club Presidency, and although we never managed to get together during the past year, we did 'Virtually' through the efforts of some dedicated club members and the board. We achieved updating our Bylaws which were passed by the members at a 'Virtual SGM', to reflect the world we presently live in through the use of Zoom technology, and although not the best way of socially mixing, it kept us interfacing. This will continue at least in the near future until it is safe to meet face to face again.

I attended a number of virtual events over the past 6 months with Calgary Burns Club, RBWF, RBANA, Irvine BC and Medicine Hat BC which included a Christmas Concert, Burns Suppers and a number of Presentations and Lectures, all to keep the Burns world communicated.

The new Board is set to take over after our Virtual AGM set for Tuesday 11th May, and the outlook looks similar to the last year, but we have new guiding principles to work with which will make it smoother for them to function effectively. I thank everyone for assisting in making this happen.

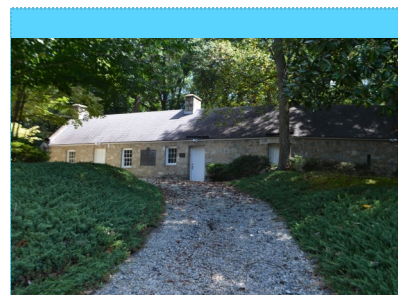
It is still being debated whether a physical RBWF Conference and AGM will proceed in September where I will be taking over from Marc Sherland as President and I will keep the club posted on any updates during the summer.

I will end with wishing the board all the success for the coming year, and to wish you and your families all a hopefully better summer than last year, and look forward to meeting you all again when we safely can.

Fond regards,

Henry Cairney

President Calgary Burns Club



1. Burns Cottage Atlanta Georgia
2. Robert The Bruce Statue Calgary
3. Burns Monument Kilmarnock Scotland

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RBWF PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (MARC SHERLAND)

BURNS POEM

I Reign In Jeanie's Bosom (1788)

Louis, what reck I by thee,
Or Geordie on his ocean?
Dyvor, beggar louns to me,
I reign in Jeanie's bosom!

Let her crown my love her law,
And in her breast enthrone me,
Kings and nations----swith awa'!
Reif randies, I disown ye!

BURNS SONG

Mary Morison (1780)

O Mary, at thy window be,
It is the wish'd, the trysted hour!
Those smiles and glances let me see,
That make the miser's treasure poor:
How blythely wad I bide the stour,
A weary slave frae sun to sun,
Could I the rich reward secure---
The lovely Mary Morison.

Yestreen, when to the trembling string
The dance gaed thro' the lighted ha',
To thee my fancy took its wing,
I sat, but neither heard nor saw:
Tho' this was fair, and that was braw,
And yon the toast of a' the town,
I sigh'd, and said among them a',
"Ye are na Mary Morison."

Oh, Mary, canst thou wreck his peace,
Wha for thy sake wad gladly die?
Or canst thou break that heart of his,
Whase only faut is loving thee?
If love for love thou wilt na gie,
At least be pity to me shown;
A thought ungentle canna be
The thought o' Mary Morison.



Now that the swell of Burns Supper events has receded, of which I thoroughly enjoyed the Medicine Hat Burns Supper and Calgary's excellent event on Zoom, I have been concentrating on the mission of the Robert Burns World Federation to reach out across the globe and unite communities of Burnsians wherever they may be. A recent development has been the formation of an embryonic International Burns Group with representation from Scotland, Australia, New Zealand, USA and Canada with Ronnie O'Byrne joining us for the second meeting in early April. My hopes are that this group might spur on ideas for intercontinental events and possibilities.

What lockdown has proved to us is that with a bit of ingenuity it is more than possible to stage online events and our series of lectures and fun events will continue beyond this period of Covid response to become an embedded aspect of the Federation offer. Next up is a lecture on 'Bonny Jean Armour' delivered by Lesley Richardson and well worth signing up for. Details can be found at www.rbwf.org.uk or on the RBWF Facebook page.

The Federation is setting up a Festival based in Kilmarnock from 23rd - 31st July titled the Killie Burns Summer and we hope to ensure that there will be opportunities for worldwide engagement with the events. Details are still being worked out, but we want to ensure that this is an event which will grow in the years to come.

Another really important piece of news is that Sir Boyd Tunnock, an Honorary President of the Federation has recently given us a sum of money to create a Lifelong Learning Unit in the Headquarters in Kilmarnock, which will include a library, digital learning suite and educational outreach resources. Although the library will take a good deal of effort to stock effectively, we are hoping that Burnsians the world over will donate to the effort and we hope to be able to offer a digital research aspect to the unit.

The Federation has also started an Annual Campaign, which at this time will focus on the achievement of Arms for Robert Burns, as he designed them. This project is very much a matter of honour for the Federation as Burns died before he was able to matriculate his own Arms and the Lord Lyon, King at Arms feels that it is perfectly appropriate to posthumously award Arms to the Bard. If you or your Club want to contribute to the campaign which needs to raise over £3,000, please email admin@rbwf.org.uk and Margaretann will advise the best way to make a donation.

Although unable to visit you in person, I hope you will see from the above that Calgary and our international responsibility, are never far from my thinking and that of the Directors on the Federation Board. We are committed to develop a range of responses and I hope you will help in that effort by submitting your ideas to the Federation for our attention. If you want to contact me directly please email president@rbwf.org.uk

Wishing you all well.

Marc R Sherland,
President of the Robert Burns World Federation

RBANA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (HENRY CAIRNEY)



I apologize if I sound like a 'broken record', but what a challenging year throughout North America! That little bug shut us down in just about every way possible.

The RBANA board has had a change since my last report in that Andy Harrower has retired from the Canadian Armed Forces and has returned back to Scotland. We wish Andy all the very best for the future in his next chapter of life.

Ronnie O'Byrne (Halton Peel BC) has replaced Andy as Canadian Director and joins Canadian Directors Brian Cumming (Calgary BC), Colin Harris (Winnipeg BC), Past President Ken Montgomery (Medicine Hat BC) and Secretary/Treasurer Mathew Hill (Medicine Hat BC).

From the USA they are Vice-President Bill Fulton (Virginia), George McClelland (Atlanta BC), Mark Ferguson (Atlanta BC) and Paul Kennedy (South Jersey BC).

This is the second year of my two year term, and the Conference/AGM have been cancelled for 2020 and 2021 and we can only hope that 2022 is kinder and allows us to physically meet at some time. The Conference was planned for Calgary, and has been postponed accordingly. We are planning a virtual AGM for early June 2021.

We were advised of a long standing member Jean Cunningham passing away this year and we sent our condolences to her husband Jim and family.

RBANA membership has stayed stable since my last report, in fact we have had a small increase in membership, but would welcome any other new members to keep the Association strong.

Please, all stay safe and well and I wish everyone the best through the expected difficult times coming over the next six months.

Henry Cairney,
President, RBANA

SINGERS 2022 TRIP UPDATE (HENRY CAIRNEY)

The Kirkcudbright Tattoo organizers and Irvine Burns Club have confirmed with myself they still wish to proceed with the invitation for our visit in 2022 which will be further assessed during 2021 and the Pandemic impact at the time.

There will be further information on this situation in future editions.

BURNS EPIGRAM Epigram On The Laird of Laggan (1793)

When Morine, deceas'd, to the Devil went down,
'Twas nothing would serve him but Satan's own crown;
"Thy fool's head," quoth Satan, "that crown shall wear never,
I grant thou'rt as wicked, but not quite so clever."

BURNS SONG A Fiddler In The North (1794)

Among the trees, where humming bees,
At buds and flowers were hinging, O,
Auld Caledon drew out her drone,
And to her pipe was singing, O:
'Twas Pibroch, Sang, Strathspeys, and Reels,
She dir'd them aff fu' clearly, O:
When there cam' a yell o' foreign squeels,
That dang her tapsalteerie, O.

Their capon craws an' queer "ha, ha's,"
They made our lugs grow eerie, O;
The hungry bike did scrape and fyke,
Till we were wae and weary, O:
But a royal ghaist, wha ance was cas'd,
A prisoner, aughteen year awa',
He fir'd a Fiddler in the North,
That dang them tapsalteerie, O.

CANADIAN PROVERBS

"Do not yell "dinner" until your knife is in the loaf."

"The devil places a pillow for a drunken man to fall upon."

"Walk a mile in my moccasins to learn where they pinch."

"You can't catch skunks with mice."

"Through other people's faults, wise men correct their own."

"Patience is a tree whose root is bitter, but its fruit is very sweet."

BURNS WORLD (TONY GRACE)

The Calgary Burns Club recently marked a significant milestone when the Membership approved a new set of Bylaws for the Club. The primary need to revise the Bylaws was to allow the Club to hold virtual meetings and permit electronic voting in real time, although the opportunity was taken to update the Bylaws in other areas.

During the year the Board has met monthly, spending time on the changes to the Bylaws and planning future events, which unfortunately finished up being cancelled. With the new Bylaws approved we are now planning on a virtual Annual General Meeting on May 11th 2021 at which electronic voting will enable us to deal with the Club's business in an efficient and speedy manner. Looking further down the road we have no planned events over the summer, although the Annual Golf event may take place. We are hopeful that we will be able to get together to celebrate St. Andrews day in November, but that remains to be seen. We are more hopeful that the annual Burns' Dinner will take place in January but if not there will certainly be a second virtual supper as we had this year.

RBANA has been badly hit in the last year. Their Annual Conference planned for Atlanta, Georgia last April had to be cancelled, and the one planned for here in Calgary this year cancelled as well: the current intention is to hold a virtual Annual General Meeting over this summer. The RBANA Board has met and organized several initiatives including a member's virtual meeting in November. They have also started to establish an Academy of Speakers, Burnsians available to speak at functions, particularly in North America. To date the names involved are Les Strachan, Ronnie O'Byrne, Jane Brown, Andy Harrower and Henry Cairney. With Andy Harrower retiring from the forces, he is moving back to Scotland although he does intend to keep his links to Canada open.

The Robert Burns World Federation has faced the same problems as everyone else. They also cancelled their 2020 Annual Conference planned for Paisley, although the 2021 Conference for 2021 is still reserved for the same venue. At the moment this looks doubtful and may be replaced by a virtual version. But whatever the form it may take Henry Cairney will be stepping up as President of the Federation. Like many Burns Clubs and other organizations, the Federation held a virtual Burns Supper in January which featured an extremely powerful and thought-provoking message from Prince Charles, the Duke of Rothesay. In order to help keep the spirit of Burns alive at this difficult time the Federation has ensured there has been a series of Burns related events available using Zoom, one of these being a youth Yule concert in December at which a number of young artists from Scotland and Russia performed Burns related works. Among those performing was Calgary's own Thomas Farquharson, a member of the 78th Fraser Highlanders whom many of us have watched become the young man he is today. Tommy performed on the bagpipes and was well received.

Obviously we all hope that the current restrictions on events, activities and travelling will soon end and we will be able to enjoy friendship and camaraderie as we have in the past, but I think we have realized that the world of Zoom and other wannabees has opened the door to future possibilities that will let us share and participate in events around the world in ways we could only imagine before.

More information is available through their respective websites:-
www.rbwf.org.uk and www.rbana.com.

THE CBC WEBSITE (PAUL ARMSTRONG)

The Club's website, calgaryburnsclub.com, continues to be a vital link for timely communication of information to Club members. We strive to keep the information current particularly that of meeting minutes and notes, the Club calendar as well as Upcoming Events. Suggestions and submissions are always welcome.

Dr. C. P. Armstrong, Webmaster

2020 Dinner Photo
(Distant Memory!)

RBWF Alan Beck (JVP) Marc Sherland
(President) Henry Cairney (SVP)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2020/2021

Executive

President: Henry Cairney

1st VP: Brian Cumming

2nd VP: Charlie Malone

Secretary: Tony Grace

Treasurer: Paul Kane

Non-Executive

Past President: Paul Armstrong

Communications: Trekker Armstrong

Director At Large: Rob Pinkerton

Director At Large: David Currie

Director At Large: Kyle Scott

Ex-Officio

Entertainment: Jim Little/Maurice MacAt-
amney

Steward: Don Humphreys

CBC 2021 DINNER (BRIAN CUMMING)

The Calgary Burns Club held its 45th Burns Supper as a Virtual Burns Celebration on January 22, 2021 due to Covid 19 restrictions. In attendance by Zoom were 52 Club members and spouses/partners. Calgary Burns Club members from Halifax, Vancouver and Mexico also joined us on the call.

Several special guest Burnsians joined us, including Ronnie O'Byrne our scheduled 2021 speaker and Jane Brown our 2018 speaker both of whom got up early to join the festivities from Scotland. Also in attendance virtually were Major Andy Harrower, our 2020 speaker from London, ON and RBANA past president Ken Montgomery from Medicine Hat, AB.

Calgary special guests included Stephanie West past pipe major, and Jason Bosworth, present pipe major of the Calgary Police Service Pipe Band, Jason Wright, our videographer and finally Thomas Farquharson of the 78th Fraser Highlanders who virtually piped us in. All performances were pre-recorded and edited by Henry Cairney. Thanks for all of your work on the program Henry. The night was programmed along the lines of the second half of our normal Burns Supper.

As MC, First VP Brian Cumming announced the evening would commence with the singing of the Canadian and Scottish national anthems, followed then by the Loyal Toast by David Currie. Brian made introductory remarks, followed by a reading of "At Whigham's Inn Sanquhar". The rest of the evening was emceed by Club President Henry Cairney.

Founding CBC member, Jack Whyte, gave us an emotional recitation of his poem "A Toast to Canada", followed by Maurice McAtamney playing his guitar while singing "Ca' the Yowes". Sadly, Jack passed away on February 22, 2021.

Ronnie O'Byrne delivered the Immortal Memory on the theme of optimism. George Muir gave us a humorous "Toast to the Lassies" followed by an equally amusing "Reply from the Lassies" delivered by Jane Brown.

The Toast to Absent Friends was proposed by Rob Pinkerton, followed by a Piping set from Kyle Scott.

The formal program was completed with the singing of Auld Lang Syne sung as recorded by the late Trevor Ramage.

Because we were not able to be together physically this year, each Club member received a Glencairn whisky glass inscribed with the Calgary Burns Club logo and the words "2021 Special Edition" as a keepsake, sponsored by Life member Gerry Wood.

My thanks to the performers who took the time to record their parts. You all made the night.

In keeping with fellowship, and connection, after the formal program was completed, all the participants had a great chat and catch-up on Zoom.

Hopefully, we will be able to meet for a normal Burns supper in 2022.

Brian Cumming, 1st V.P. & 2021 Burns Supper Convener

CBC SINGERS (RON PRATT)

We participated in one sunrise and two sunset ceremonies at the Field of Crosses during the first eleven days of November. The sunset service on November 3rd had an unexpected challenge as we were requested to also sing, at short notice, the Star-Spangled Banner. This was to honour those Americans who came to Canada to enlist in the war effort and whose crosses in the Field displayed the Stars and Stripes. The sunrise service on November 7th was the Field of Crosses Aboriginal Day and we were privileged to hear included in the ceremony, Aboriginal prayer and singing from some of their veterans. Our group of nine singers managed well despite the wearing of masks and social distancing.

In January, we provided on fairly short notice, entertainment on DVD to one of our regular retirement homes. Included was the address to the haggis, which we do each January, and I'm told that the residents enjoyed the entertainment but were dismayed that, this year, the staff had not been prepared with the actual haggis for them to enjoy. Thanks to Paul Kane for his assistance and especially to Henry Cairney for his music and all the skills necessary to get this done.

Water Valley was making tentative plans to hold their Celtic Festival in mid June, but unfortunately we have been advised that the event has been cancelled.

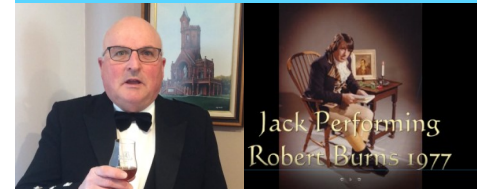
As before, future performances and practices will be considered as and when social mixing is allowed.

Respectfully.....Ron Pratt



Henry Cairney

Brian Cumming



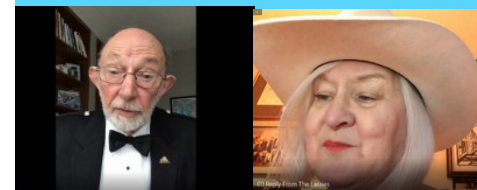
David Currie

Jack Whyte



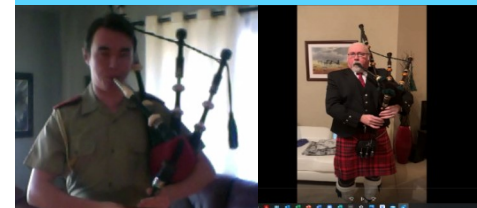
Maurice McAtamney

Ronnie O'Byrne



George Muir

Jane Brown



Thomas Farquharson

Kyle Scott



Rob Pinkerton

Trevor Ramage

FUTURE EVENTS (TREKKER ARMSTRONG)

Possible St Andrews Event in November
T.B.A. Due to Covid-19 Pandemic

THE CARNIE GROUP (TONY GRACE)

McPherson's Farewell



JAMES MCPHERSON



**DUFF HOUSE
BANFF SCOTLAND**



**BANFF SCOTLAND
MCPHERSON HANGING**



**MCPHERSON MUSEUM
NEWTONMORE SCOTLAND**

McPherson or MacPherson or any other variation in the spelling of the name, is a not an uncommon name in Scotland. Some time ago we spent several meetings discussing the works of another James MacPherson the writer of the Ossian Poems. But the McPherson I want to talk about this time was in fact an outlaw whose life was cut short by the gallows at the tender age of twenty five.

James or Jamie as he was better known, was the illegitimate son of a Highland laird one MacPherson of Invereshie and of a beautiful gypsy girl (or tinker) that he met at a wedding. This gentleman – in the spirit of Burns – acknowledged his son and took him into his own home. However whilst still a young boy, his father was killed while attempting to recover some cattle that had been taken from Badenoch by reivers, at which time Jamie was reclaimed by his mother's kin. Apparently his mother frequently took him back to his father's kin who continued to clothe him well and provided her with money. Jamie grew up to be a man of uncommon personal strength – “in beauty, strength and stature rarely equaled.” He became an accomplished swordsman and a renowned fiddler and eventually became the leader of the gypsy group. In those days the tinker-gypsies earned their living by trading in horses and they seem to have been well regarded by the ordinary country folk.

McPherson incurred the enmity of the wealthy lairds and land owners of the low country of Moray, Banff and Aberdeenshire, particularly one Duff of Braco who went so far as to organize a posse to catch him. His career of robbery (freebooting) led to a reign of terror in the markets of Banff, Elgin and Forres when he and his followers would march in with a piper at their head, but allegedly committed no act of cruelty or robbery of a widow, the fatherless, and the distressed, a sort of Highland Robin Hood? Indeed this could have been his downfall as he stopped a member of his tribe from robbing a house when the owner was away preparing to bury his wife and two children, and he then was betrayed to the vengeance of the law. Over the years he was captured several times but succeeded in escaping with the help of friends – particularly the Grants, but eventually he was seized by the aforementioned Duff of Braco for bearing arms at the Keith market.

At the Saint Rufus Fair in Keith in November 1700, Braco's men caught up with Jamie and after a fierce fight in which one of his men was killed, Jamie himself was captured. According to his own account a woman dropped a blanket over him from a window, and he was overcome before he could divest himself of it. Regardless a very strong escort took him to the Banff prison.

At that time it was a criminal offence merely to be a Gypsy (or an Egyptian as per the Act), and it was under this statute that he was tried along with three of his men. In pronouncing them guilty the Sheriff of Banffshire Nicholas Dunbar stated they were “fyllen [found], culpable and convick [convicted]” and sentenced “for sae muckle, as you, James MacPherson, are found guilty of being Egyptians and vagabonds and oppressors of his [Majesty's] free lieges. Therefore, I adjudge and decern [under Scot's Law, this is to enter a judicial decree] you to be taken to the cross of Banff to be hanged by the neck to the death.” He was just 25 years old.

During the week between the sentencing and his execution MacPherson is said to have composed the lyrics and the melody of what we now call MacPherson's Rant or Lament. Sir Walter Scott later claimed that MacPherson played it under the gallows and then offered his fiddle to anyone in his tribe who would play it at his wake. When no one stepped forward, he broke the fiddle – some say over his knee and others over the executioners head – and then tossed it in to the crowd commenting “No one else shall play Jamie MacPherson's fiddle.” The broken fiddle can still be seen at the Clan MacPherson Museum near Newtonmore, Inverness-shire. He was then hanged – reputedly the last capital sentence executed in Scotland under Heritable Jurisdiction, taking place on November 16th 1700.

An interesting foot note has a universal belief in the North East of Scotland that a reprieve was on its way to Banff at the time of the execution. It is reputed that Duff of Braco saw a lone rider approaching from Turriff and correctly assumed that he was carrying a pardon for Jamie from the Lord of Grant. As the legend continues he set about turning the village clock some fifteen minutes ahead and so ensuring that the hanging was over with before the pardon arrived. The magistrates who were responsible were apparently punished for this and the town hall clock was kept fifteen minutes before the correct time for many years. Even to this day the town of Macduff has its west-facing town hall clock face covered so the people of Banff cannot see the correct time!!

There are many variations to the words of MacPherson's Rant and many verses. The best known ones are ascribed to Robert Burns who wrote his MacPherson's Farewell to the tune of MacPherson's Rant.

THE CARNIE GROUP (CONTINUED)

Chorus

*Sae Rantingly, sae wantonly,
Sae Dauntingly gaed be,
He play'd a spring, and danc'd it round
Below the gallows-tree.*

Farewell, ye dungeons dark and strong,
The wretch's destinie!
M'Pherson's time will not be long
On yonder gallows-tree.

O what is death but parting breath?
On many a bloody plain
I've dared his face, and in this place
I scorn him yet again.

Untie these bands from off my hands,
And bring to me my sword,
And there's no a man in all Scotland
But I'll brave him at a word.

I've lived a life of sturt and strife; *violent quarrelling*
I die by treacherie:
It burns my heart I must depart,
And not avenged be.

Now farewell light, thou sunshine bright,
And all beneath the sky!
May coward shame distain his name,
The wretch that dare not die.

Prepared for the Carnie Group by Tony Grace

CBC COMMUNICATIONS (TREKKER ARMSTRONG)

The Club maintains a generic email address [calgaryburnsclub@gmail.com] as well as a Contact Form on the website [www.calgaryburnsclub.com]. We receive submissions to both sources, and these are forwarded to the appropriate person for action.

The Calgary Burns Club email distribution list is maintained electronically and its source is from our Membership list. Please ensure that your membership information is correct, and the appropriate email is recorded on the published club website Membership list, to receive the Club communication.

Members can send items, that may be of interest to the Club, to the above email address for the Communications Convener to distribute. The Communication Convener reserves the right to decide the appropriateness of these and if there is any question they will be forwarded to the President for a decision.

Over the past year we experienced several email issues with distribution of large files [mostly videos] that resulted in the Club emails being suspended by ISP providers. The Communications Convener worked with the respective companies to resolve the suspension. The Communications Convener has stopped sending large file attachments (e.g., > 15 mb) to the membership distribution list.

The Calgary Burns Club, by having a Gmail account, also has an associated YouTube account [Robert Burns]. The Communication Convener is now utilizing the Club's YouTube account for videos that were once sent by email. YouTube allows members to "Subscribe" to the account and receive notification of any new uploads, but more importantly allows the Communications Convener to reference uploaded files as "URL links" in the Club email distributions. YouTube also provides a platform for the Calgary Burns Club to access Social Media, not only for its members, but also abroad.

The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020/21 has impacted everyone, including the role of the Club's Communication Convener. To maintain the fellowship of the Club, members began to meet virtually via Zoom. As Communication Convener, I was tasked to schedule, and technically host the monthly members' get-togethers. As well, the Club's Carnie group embraced virtual meetings which the Convener assisted in scheduling and initiating hosting.

In addition, while we were unable to celebrate our Annual Burns Supper in person, the Club held a successful Virtual Burns Supper which the Convener technically hosted [recording available on the Club YouTube channel]. I appreciate the members patience and cooperation as we developed the necessary protocols to conduct successful virtual gatherings. It was a learning process, including for this Communication Convener.

We continue to receive regular information from RBWF and RBANA which is forwarded to our members as appropriate.

Trekker Armstrong
Communications Convener

VIRTUAL MEETING ETIQUETTE 14 Guidance Rules

Here are some basic 'Virtual Meeting' guidance rules to aid a better experience online:

Rule 1: Making eye contact is important. (Look directly into the camera, not at the person you're talking to. (Oops.))

Rule 2: Only video chat when video is necessary. (Phone call easier?)

Rule 3: Be selective about who you invite. (Only invite those absolutely necessary attendees)

Rule 4: Skip the pajamas, even on the bottom. (You may forget yourself and stand up!)

Rule 5: Default to mute. (Good etiquette to remain muted until you are to speak)

Rule 6: Use a virtual background. (Easier to stop Video Bombers!)

Rule 7: Turn on your camera. (It's a video call after all, not a telephone!)

Rule 8: Set two start times. (Soft start 10 minutes before Hard Start time)

Rule 9: Practice with the technology. (Learn to use the program basics of muting, video on etc...)

Rule 10: Participate in obvious ways. (Be a part of the meeting, not an observer!)

Rule 11: Don't roll your eyes, even if you're not on the main screen. (Try to maintain decorum as you are always seen on screen!)

Rule 12: No swearing! (Good luck!)

Rule 13: Stop using your mic to talk over people. (Don't be rude and interrupt, raise your hand or chat to request to speak)

Rule 14: Ensure your name is clearly displayed! (Avoid using device default names like iPad 700 etc....)

Submitted by Henry Cairney

BURNS POEM

Holy Willie's Prayer (1785)

O Thou, who in the heavens does dwell,
Who, as it pleases best Thyself,
Sends ane to heaven an' ten to hell,
A' for Thy glory,
And no for ony gude or ill
They've done afore Thee!

I bless and praise Thy matchless might,
When thousands Thou hast left in night,
That I am here afore Thy sight,
For gifts an' grace
A burning and a shining light
To a' this place.

What was I, or my generation,
That I should get sic exaltation,
I wha deserve most just damnation
For broken laws,
Five thousand years ere my creation,
Thro' Adam's cause?

When frae my mither's womb I fell,
Thou might hae plunged me deep in hell,
To gnash my gums, to weep and wail,
In burnin lakes,
Where damned devils roar and yell,
Chain'd to their stakes.

Yet I am here a chosen sample,
To show Thy grace is great and ample;
I'm here a pillar o' Thy temple,
Strong as a rock,
A guide, a buckler, and example,
To a' Thy flock.

O Lord, Thou kens what zeal I bear,
When drinkers drink, an' swearers swear,
An' singin there, an' dancin here,
Wi' great and sma';
For I am keepit by Thy fear
Free frae them a'.

But yet, O Lord! confess I must,
At times I'm fash'd wi' fleshly lust:
An' sometimes, too, in wardly trust,
Vile self gets in:
But Thou remembers we are dust,
Defil'd wi' sin.

(Continued on next page)

BURNS AND SCOTTISH MINISTERS PART 1 (IAN DENNESS)

Introduction

To write a paper on Burns and his relationship with Scottish ministers I believe it is necessary to provide some background on the religion prevailing in Scotland during the 18th century, Burns' time.

Religion in Scotland in Burns' time can be perceived as a consuming way of life for the inhabitants. The two main religions, were Presbyterianism and Catholicism with Burns being brought up in a staunchly Presbyterian family by his father, William Burnes, with William embracing the 'Auld Licht' aspects of Calvinism.

It seems like it didn't take Burns too long, as he grew older, to recognize certain aspects of the 'Auld Licht' with which he disagreed. The 'Auld Lichts' represented a more severe and unforgiving form of Presbyterianism, which involved fire and brimstone sermons and the idea of predestination as a route to heaven, which Burns so despised. The Calvinist influence was strong and Burns found himself in opposition to its theology and social attitudes. Orthodoxy ruled in the church and views that ran contrary to it were not tolerated. It is apparent when reading Burns' poems and letters that he felt profoundly about the problems and issues within the 'Auld Licht' aspects of the Presbyterian church, namely the hypocrisy of certain ministers and their Kirk sessions. The latter serving as a moral watchdog, summoning congregants who strayed from the 'straight and narrow' and handing out censure and punishment, as Burns was to find out when Jean Armour became pregnant. These aspects were hypocritical and counter to his beliefs as a Christian and he found himself more comfortable with embracing the theory and teachings of the 'New Licht', who tended to be more 'liberal in their theology and less moralistic in their preaching'. The 'New Licht' tended to be a more moderate form of Presbyterianism, which emphasized the human aspects of religion.

Burns was a poet with a deep social conscience, he could not accept the orthodox position of the so called 'Auld Lichts'. He believed in the power of good works to determine salvation and sincerely believed that all humans were to be treated with dignity and equality. Amongst some of the stories and legends written about Burns is one concerning his stance on being anti-religion. Now is that because of poems like 'Holy Willie's Prayer' or is it because of his many letters written about hypocritical aspects of Calvinism and Presbyterianism that drew his ire and his satirical, pointed jabs. To Burns, religion was in the simplest and most literal meaning of the phrase, " the religion of humanity."

In researching for this paper, I was able to locate a large number, of references, and interactions in his poems and letters that Burns had with various ministers, all of whom had some sort of affect, positive or negative, on Burns. Ministers in the 'Auld Licht' camp were subject to Burns' scathing and satirical comments. Some however in the 'New Licht' camp were entirely the opposite and to whom he was highly complimentary, especially those pertaining to 'fellow poets' such as the Reverend John Skinner, author of 'Tullochgorum'.

'Auld Licht' Ministers

The Reverend William 'Daddy' Auld 1709-91,

Auld was the Minister at Mauchline for 50 years, from 1742, the minister to Elder William Fisher and Burns and died unmarried.

A zealous, hard working man, though very opinionated, he seems to have lacked ambition, and to have been quite content to remain a parish minister. Although he was a rigid Whig and an upholder of the 'Auld Lichts', his attitude was described more as old fashioned, rather than bigoted, but he was said to have been 'kindly and courteous'. This kindness being demonstrated when Jean and Robert had to make their three appearances in the church before Auld, due to Jean's pregnancy, the poet was allowed to stand in his own pew next to Jean, instead of in the 'place of repentance'. By keeping silent about his verbal vows, Burns then got from Auld his certificate as a 'blameless single man'.

It was in the poem 'The Kirk's Alarm', that Burns called him "Daddy Auld" and not actually in 'Holy Willie's Prayer', which suggests that in spite of the reprimands for fornication with Jean which Auld had to administer, Burns regarded Auld with a respect that was probably mutual.

So much for the charitable interpretation of Auld's character. On the other hand, it has to be admitted that the full story of the proceedings against Gavin Hamilton, an ardent supporter of Burns, suggest a vindictiveness, which it is hard to account for merely by assuming a clash of personalities.

Auld also had a further connection to Burns as he baptised Jean's first set of twins, Jean and Robert.

One other claim to fame due to Auld was that in 1791 he contributed to Sir John Sinclair's *Statistical Account*, his observations on the village of Mauchline.

The Reverend William Dalrymple, (1723 — 1814)

William Dalrymple was licensed to preach in 1745, and became junior minister of Ayr Parish in 1746, where he remained for 10 years. Dalrymple was considered a mild Calvinist, which suited Burn's father, William, who approved of his mild flavour of Calvinism and also, interestingly did not appear to bring him into conflict with the orthodox Calvinists. It was also Dalrymple who baptised Burns when the poet was one day old. Dalrymple is mentioned in two of Burns' poems, in 'The Twa Herds' Burns appears to be quite complimentary as he depicts Dalrymple as having been 'lang' the 'fae' of the 'Auld Licht' faction. However, in 'The Kirk of Scotland's Alarm' Burns called him 'D'rymple mild,

BURNS AND SCOTTISH MINISTERS PART 1 (CONTINUED)

D'rymple mild! D'rymple mild, tho' your heart's like a child,
And your life like the new-driven snaw,
Yet that winna save you, auld Satan must have you,
For preaching that three's ane an' twa,
D'rymple mild! For preaching that three's ane an' twa.

The Reverend Dr. James Mackinlay (1756-1841)

James MacKinlay was inducted to the second charge of Kilmarnock, that of the Laigh Kirk, on the death of the Rev. John Mutrie in 1785. Mackinlay was an 'Auld Licht' minister, and it was to the considerable disappointment of the parish moderates at his being given the charge. He was appointed to the charge by the Earl of Glencairn, because Glencairn believed the majority of the parishioners wanted an 'Auld Licht' man. Mackinlay's induction inspired Burns to write 'The Ordination', which sets forth the vigorous treatment that Mackinlay and his colleagues would mete out to 'Curst 'Common-Sense':

'This day M'Kinlay takes the flail,
An' he's the boy will blaud her! [*slap*]
He'll clap a shangan on her tail, [*stick put on the tail of a dog*]
An' set the bairns to daud her [*bespatter*]
Wi' dirt this day.'

Burns sent out a number of manuscript copies of this poem, not all of them in his own name, but some of them signed 'Rob Rhymer'.

The Reverend Alexander Moodie (1722 — 99)

Educated at Glasgow University, he started his ministry in Culross in 1759, and moved two years later to Riccarton. Moodie was a staunch member of the 'Auld Licht' party, and, as such, a target for Burns. He was a zealous Calvinist preacher, with a hellfire and damnation, bellicose preaching style. He is identified as one of the 'herds' in the poem 'The Twa Herds' or 'Holy Tulzie', which is a satire on an unseemly quarrel between him and the Rev. John Russell of Kilmarnock, over parish boundaries, in which Moodie is described as 'Singet Sawnie'

O, Moddie, man, an' wordy Russell,
How could you raise so vile a bustle;
Ye'll see how New-Light herds will whistle,
An' think it fine!
The Lord's cause ne'er gat sic a twistle,
Sin' I hae min'.

The Reverend James Oliphant (1734-1818)

The evangelical Minister of Kilmarnock High Church from 1764-73, having been called from the Gorbals Chapel of Ease, he later, obtained a charge in Dumbarton. He was an 'Auld Licht' minister with a powerful voice. Burns referred to him in 'The Ordination' as making the church 'yell'. On 29th June, 1787, at the conclusion of his West Highland Tour, Burns was made a freeman of the Royal Burgh of Dumbarton. According to Dr. George Grierson, who was Burns' travelling companion, at least for the latter part of the journey, the Dumbarton Magistrates were denounced publicly the following day by the Reverend James Oliphant, Minister of Dumbarton Parish Kirk, 'for conferring honours on the author of vile, detestable and immoral publications. It is generally assumed that Oliphant's opposition was no doubt due to the fact that he had been satirised in Burns' poem 'The Ordination', written the previous year of 1786. Although considered ultra-Calvinistic, records of the period, show that Oliphant did not allow the demands of the next world to interfere with his enjoyment of this. Yet another example of the hypocrisy prevalent in the Presbyterian church at the time. Throughout his ministry he was noted for his good deeds, and his sense of humour, which often enlivened his conversation and his way of life. When he died in 1818, his passing was mourned by his parishioners, who had, over the years, come to regard him with deep affection and appreciation.

In addition to his ministerial duties, Oliphant was an author of religious books as he wrote 'A Mother's Catechism, and A Sacramental Catechism,' both of which were popular in his day.

The Reverend John Russell, (1740 -1817)

A native of Moray, who, after a period of teaching in the Parish School at Cromarty, was ordained minister of the High Church in Kilmarnock and was called to Stirling in 1800. Russell was described as being 'a large, robust, dark-complexioned man, imperturbably grave, and with a sullen expression seated in the deep folds of his forehead' leading to his nickname 'Black Russell'. There were also rumours of a woman attending his church who suddenly saw Russell in a pulpit, and was 'so overcome with terror that she fainted away'.

Russell was a staunch supporter of the 'Auld Licht' teaching, and a powerful preacher of the roaring hellfire-threatening sort, to which Burns was vigorously opposed and probably led to Burns mentioning Russell in a number of poems. He is mentioned as 'Black Russell' in 'The Holy Fair', 'wordy Russell' in 'The Twa Herds', 'Rumble John' in 'The Kirk's Alarm' and a reference is also made to him in 'The Ordination'.

(Continued on page 10) 9

Holy Willie's Prayer (Continued)

O Lord! yestreen, Thou kens, wi' Meg-
Thy pardon I sincerely beg,
O! may't ne'er be a livin plague
To my dishonour,
An' I'll ne'er lift a lawless leg
Again upon her.

Besides, I farther maun allow,
Wi' Leezie's lass, three times I trow-
But Lord, that Friday I was fou,
When I cam near her;
Or else, Thou kens, Thy servant true
Wad never steer her.

Maybe Thou lets this fleshly thorn
Buffet Thy servant e'en and morn,
Lest he owre proud and high shou'd turn,
That he's sae gifted:
If sae, Thy han' maun e'en be borne,
Until Thou lift it.

Lord, bless Thy chosen in this place,
For here Thou hast a chosen race:
But God confound their stubborn face,
An' blast their name,
Wha bring Thy elders to disgrace
An' public shame.

Lord, mind Gaw'n Hamilton's deserts;
He drinks, an' swears, an' plays at cartes,
Yet has sae mony takin arts,
Wi' great and sma',
Frae God's ain priest the people's hearts
He steals awa.

An' when we chasten'd him therefor,
Thou kens how he bred sic a splore,
An' set the warld in a roar
O' laughing at us;-
Curse Thou his basket and his store,
Kail an' potatoes.

Lord, hear my earnest cry and pray'r,
Against that Presbyt'ry o' Ayr;
Thy strong right hand, Lord, make it bare
Upo' their heads;
Lord visit them, an' dinna spare,
For their misdeeds.

(Continued on next page)

Holy Willie's Prayer (Continued)

O Lord, my God! that glib-tongu'd Aiken,
My vera heart and flesh are quakin,
To think how we stood sweatin', shakin,
An' p-'d wi' dread,
While he, wi' hingin lip an' snakin,
Held up his head.

Lord, in Thy day o' vengeance try him,
Lord, visit them wha did employ him,
And pass not in Thy mercy by 'em,
Nor hear their pray'r,
But for Thy people's sake, destroy 'em,
An' dinna spare.

But, Lord, remember me an' mine
Wi' mercies temp'ral an' divine,
That I for grace an' gear may shine,
Excell'd by nane,
And a' the glory shall be thine,
Amen, Amen!

Contributed by Henry Cairney



Holy Willie's Prayer



Glencairn Parish Map

Lagganpark

BURNS AND SCOTTISH MINISTERS PART 1 (CONTINUED)

Russell was also quite a prolific author writing several books and pamphlets on religion and ending up becoming involved in a wordy doctrinal battle with a fellow 'Auld Licht' Minister, the Reverend Alexander Moodie of Riccarton. It was the undignified spectacle of two members of the 'unco guid' fighting between themselves that inspired Burns to write 'The Twa Herds'.

Elder William Fisher, (Holy Willie) 1737 — 1809)

One cannot discuss Burns' satirical views of the 'Auld Licht' aspects of religion, without mentioning 'Holy Willie's Prayer.' The poem is a tale of an insignificant little church elder of Mauchline, who becomes the prototype of hypocrisy in what is perhaps the greatest religious satire written.

The poem was prompted by the defeat of the 'Auld Licht' censure of his friend Gavin Hamilton for his failure to participate in public worship. The poem, shaped like a prayer, is put into the mouth of the 'Auld Licht' adherent 'Holy Willie.' It begins with an invocation, which articulates Willie's doctrinal stance on predestination.

O Thou that in the heavens does dwell!
Wha, as it pleases best thysel,
Sends ane to heaven an ten to hell,
A' for thy glory!
And no for ony gude or ill
They've done before thee.

The poem continues with Willie's thanks for his own "elected" status and reaches its highest moments in Willie's confession that 'At times I'm fash'd wi' fleshly lust.' Burns has Willie condemn himself by describing moments of fornication and justifying them as temptations visited on him by God. The concluding stanzas recount Willie's opinion of Hamilton, 'He drinks, and swears, and plays at cartes', and his chagrin that Minister Auld was defeated. The poem ends with the requisite petition, calling for divine vengeance on those who disagree with him and asking blessings for himself and his like.

(Part 2 to be continued in the Fall edition) Contributed by Ian Denness

WILLIE NICOL PART 3 (1744 – 1797) (STEPHEN NICHOL)

In 1910 John Corrie published an account of Glencairn Parish (Dumfriesshire) which included a chapter on Robert Burns association with the Parish. Reference is also made to Willie Nicol's association with the Parish. Corrie's account includes a map of the Parish and shows the location of Lagganpark farm. There is also mention of Craigdarroch, Glencairn Parish being the home of "Annie Laurie", the woman who was immortalised in the song by the same name.

When Robert Burns was in his excise service, his "beat" took him into the Parish and allowed him to renew acquaintances; Riddell of Glenriddell, Laurie of Maxwellton and Ferguson of Craigdarroch. These personalities, who were the grand-nephews and a grandson of Annie Ferguson (nee Laurie), would feature in another of Burns' work, known as "The Whistle". The whistle was the stake being contested for by those three and it involved a test of drinking capacity. John Corrie's account refers to "the minute of the bett" and was signed by the three and dated 16th October, 1789.

John Corrie questions the date when Willie Nicol obtained ownership of Lagganpark farm and suggests the change of ownership did not occur until March, 1790. Rev. Dr. James Hewison's account of Willie Nicol which was made in 1924, after Laurie's 1910 account of Glencairn Parish, appears to have involved more research into the land transfer records and contact with the Aitken family line that followed down from Willie Nicol's family. It was Hewison's account that refers to the date of conveyance as being 11th January, 1788 for proof of Nicol's ownership of Lagganpark farm. The conveyance showed change of ownership but not access.

It is my belief Willie Nicol's Lagganpark farm was immortalized with the gathering by Willie Nicol, Robert Burns and Allen Masterton. Masterton was, like Nicol, an Edinburgh school master, at the High School, Edinburgh. Masterton had an interest in music and when Burns wrote "Willie brewed a peck o' maut", it was Masterton that provided the air for Burns' words. Masterton would go on to later put music to a number of Burns' poems. This particular song captures the spirit of these three friends' 'camaraderie' and their gathering at Nicol's property in the fall of 1789. The exact date and place of the composition of this drinking song is subject to some conjecture but Hewison's account does point to the gathering having occurred at Willie Nicol's Lagganpark farm. It is reasonable to think that Willie Nicol would have been the catalyst for involving Masterton with Robert Burns.

Willie Nicol had a dispute with the rector of the High School of Edinburgh, Alexander Adam (1741-1809). Willie Nicol's position in this dispute would have been weakened due to Willie's harsh discipline that he dealt out to his students and the effects that alcohol was having upon his character. The result of this dispute was that Willie Nicol resigned from his position at the High School in 1795 (McKay) and he went on to establish his own teaching facility which he ran until his death in 1795 (McKay).

WILLIE NICOL PART 3 (1744 – 1797) (CONTINUED)

In 1793 these three 'blithe lads' once more convened, this time at the Globe Tavern in Dumfries to visit "under the horn of the moon and did not part company until the crow of the cock" to quote the words of the Rev. Dr. Hewison in referring to the lines of Burns. These three 'blithe lads' would not survive for long after this occasion with Burns dying in 1796, Nicol in 1797 and Masterton in 1799.

Nicol's death occurred on the 21st April, 1797 and he was buried in the Calton Churchyard in an unmarked plot. Nicol's end came with his enslavement to his need for alcohol. A marriage record exists, dated 22nd February, 1797, for Janet Cairns, who married John Finlayson and gave her father's name as John Cairns on the marriage registration record. This occurred less than two months before Nicol's death. The conclusion to be drawn is that Janet Cairns must have been a practical woman that ended her relationship with Willie Nicol and remarried.

Willie Nicol left his estate to his grandson, Dr. William Nicol Aitken. Dr. Aitken, after serving in Sierra Leone as the Colonial Surgeon, retired and died at Penport, Dumfriesshire in 1882. He is buried at Glencairn Churchyard and his son (Willie Nicol's great grandson) sold the Lagganpark farm and its ownership reverted to the Maxwellton Estate.

Burns continued his communication with Willie Nicol for most of his life, in spite of the character defects that Nicol was burdened with. In 1787, after Burns left Edinburgh on what was his first Edinburgh visit; Burns wrote to Willie Nicol addressing him as:

"Kind honest-hearted Willie".

At the time of Burns' Highland tour on which Willie Nicol accompanied him, Burns commented about his friend Nicol as a "robust but clumsy person but who had value due to his vigorous talents, even though they were sometimes clouded by coarseness of manners".

In a summary of Robert Burns' acquaintances written close to the time that Burns and Nicol were living, "A Winter with Robert Burns", which covers the years 1786-1787, the description of Willie Nicol ends with:

"Nicol won an honourable and sufficient competence for his family,
but died of jaundice and other complaints, the effects of continued
intemperance".

Willie Nicol does not enjoy a reputation that Robert Burns is remembered with. Sadly, Nicol is barely a footnote in history and if he had not had a friendship with Robert Burns, he would have now been forgotten. Ironically, Willie Nicol's legacy is to be found in his first born child, Robert; born to Margaret Johnston in 1775, Willie's wife from his first marriage; and this was Nicol's family that he abandoned.

References:

James Marshall "A Winter with Robert Burns" (1786-1787)

Rev. Dr. James King Hewison "Willie Nicol" (1924)

John Corrie "Glencairn (Dumfriesshire) The Annals of an Inland Parish" (1910)

Wikipedia "Robert Burns" (2020)

Scotland's Church Records of Marriages and Births available online via "IGI Batch Numbers, Scotland"

Contributed by Stephen H. Nichol 2020-2021

MEMBERSHIP NEWS (PAUL ARMSTRONG)

Queen Elizabeth II described 1992 as "Annus Horribilis" but it's interesting that she hasn't given 2020/21 a similar designation. This, I am sure everyone will agree, describes the case worldwide this past year! The membership in the Club has been stable with a few minor changes and currently stands at 59 and is comprised of:

- 36 Ordinary Members
- 11 Life Members
- 6 Local Associate Members
- 5 Distant Associate Members
- 1 Honorary Member

Understandably, COVID-19 has severely limited our ability to meet, socialize and carry out the business of the Club but it has also forced us to find novel ways of doing this. Although not the same, we have managed to interact with each other using virtual tools. As the vaccination roll-out continues and the number of cases decreases, we hope that restrictions will be eased, and we will be able to meet in person once again.

Please stay well and I hope everyone has been able to book their vaccination and, if you haven't, please do so!

Paul Armstrong Immediate Past President



The Laird O' Cockpen

BURNS POEM

When She Cam' Ben She Bobbed (1792)

O when she cam' ben she bobbed fu' law,
O when she cam' ben she bobbed fu' law,
And when she cam' ben, she kiss'd Cockpen,
And syne denied she did it at a'.

And was na Cockpen right saucy witha'?
And was na Cockpen right saucy witha'?
In leaving the daughter of a lord,
And kissin' a collier lassie an' a'!

O never look down, my lassie, at a',
O never look down, my lassie, at a',
Thy lips are as sweet, and thy figure complete,
As the finest dame in castle or ha'.

Tho' thou has nae silk, and holland sae sma',
Tho' thou has nae silk, and holland sae sma',
Thy coat and thy sark are thy ain handiwork,
And lady Jean was never sae braw.

TONY GRACE (HENRY CAIRNEY)



Tony, Sheila and Family



St Andrews University



**Tony and Sheila
Broughty Ferry**



Syncrude Fort McMurray

Tony Grace has been a member of the Calgary Burns club for 16 years which included becoming President of the club in 2011 and 2012. The following is Tony's story.

Tony was born in Blackburn, Lancashire, during the 'Battle of Britain', although he finished his schooling in Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire in 1958 stating *"Overall I enjoyed school although I was not a great scholar but did finish with four A Levels; however I really loved the sports side of school which offered a wide choice of activities"*

Tony achieved a degree in Mechanical Engineering from St Andrews University, graduating in 1961, he then took up a position with the National Coal board primarily in Fife, although working in many mine facilities throughout Scotland also.

When Tony was at University, he played Rugby and also joined the Territorial Army where he wore the kilt for the first time! Tony commented, *"I vividly remember marching back to barracks in Inverness following a church service behind the pipe band wearing full Highland dress. Summer training camps with the OTC took me to several locations in Scotland thus cementing my feelings of the country – these travels included the Isle of Skye, Glen Affric, Glen Cannich and the Black Isle as well as the Badenoch and Strathspey regions."*

Tony continues, *"At the end of the first year of working with the Coal Board Sheila and I were married in Broughty Ferry and lived in Kirkcaldy, later moving to Dundonald, near Cardenden. Sheila and I had met as students in Dundee at one of the regular Saturday Night 'Hops' in the Student's Union. Although she was born in Peru and did all her schooling there she considered herself a Scot as both her parents had emigrated to Peru in the 1930's. I eventually was appointed as the Deputy Chief Mechanical Engineer at a brand new colliery, the Seafield as it went into production, in Kirkcaldy where I stayed for two years. It was during this time that I started to absorb Scottish culture as we explored a bit locally and I started reading – in fact I bought my first edition of Burns in 1964 and still have it!"*

Tony changed industries from Coal Mines to the Oil Business and moved to the Esso Refinery on the South Coast of England, whilst there he observed Ocean going liners into and out of Southampton which led to itchy feet and subsequently a move to Canada. Tony commented, *"Our finances were such that we needed a sponsored passage from the Canadian Government (later repaid with interest), a requirement that I come out by myself to get a job (I did not have one to come to) and somewhere to live before the Government would authorize travel for Sheila and the two children we had by then. Fortunately things did work out and I soon landed a job in Fort McMurray (population 5000) after travelling between Calgary and Sarnia looking for work. Our first spell in Fort McMurray lasted a bare eighteen months as despite needing all the skilled help they need, Great Canadian Oil Sands were not a particularly helpful employer to me."*

Tony and family moved to Ontario where he became a Nuclear Engineer with what was then Ontario Hydro. Tony Commented, *"We thoroughly enjoyed living in the Ottawa Valley for four years – it really is a very attractive area with Algonquin Park so close. We bought a canoe and I even played both Rugger and Soccer for the Deep River teams so we made a lot of friends."*

Through the contacts in the Oilsands Industry, the family moved back to Alberta in 1973 where Tony worked in Construction for Syncrude who had just been authorized by the Alberta Government to build their new plant.

Tony commented, *"In October 1973 I became the very first Syncrude employee to be resident on the Syncrude site where over the next five years a vast modern industrial complex would be built."*

TONY GRACE (CONTINUED)

Tony continued, *“This was history indeed and most people felt that. In addition to building the new plant of course we also built the town of Fort McMurray which by the time Syncrude came on line in 1978 had a population of over 26,000 with all the attendant problems of growing a town that fast, even Highway 63 was only in the latter stages of being paved.”*

Along with a hectic work schedule with long hours there was a busy social calendar as most people had come from somewhere else and had few friends so different interest groups were springing up., cultural, recreational, sporting and hobby driven. Among these a Burns Club had been formed in the early 1970’s and the annual Burns Supper was the hottest ticket in town with a long waiting list every year. Tony commented, *“The Club itself had only twenty members with only one member from a family. Sheila was invited to join – after all she had the Scottish blood – and over the years we were in town she served two terms as President. In addition to the annual Supper the Club regularly attracted touring Scottish performers and these concerts were popular and usually sold out. I remember in particular the Alexander Brothers as they had a free night in town so the Club held a reception for the members to meet the boys and it was held at our house. It was a wonderful evening with the guys proving to be interesting and easy to entertain.”*

The construction team were together for several years and a great sense of camaraderie grew up and participated widely in the activities of the growing community. Apart from regular sports such as hockey and soccer teams were entered in the Winter Carnival Broomball competition and the Blueberry Festival’s raft race on the Clearwater.

Following completion of the construction phase, Tony had the choice of moving on or moving to the Operation side of Syncrude., where he chose to stay and was then responsible for the capital projects of the company before moving into Operations, where he eventually took over the Upgrading department. In 1989 he moved to the business side as Executive Vice president, with his final assignment being the responsibility for major strategic projects including the development of a brand new mine and the major expansion of processing capability downstream.

Tony commented, *“But nothing goes on forever and as the millennium passed it came time for retirement and a move further south, even though that meant leaving our daughter, who had spent her entire life in Fort McMurray, her husband and their three children. She is still there!”* Calgary beckoned and Tony spent several years consulting and in his words, *“hopefully being useful to several new initiatives in the Oil Sands.”*

Socially Tony and a few of his associates attended Burns Suppers put on by the Calgary Burns Club and after a couple of these, Ian Denness proposed him for membership. Within a year he took on the role of Treasurer and he has been on the Executive ever since and indicated he thoroughly enjoyed it while believing to have contributed in a meaningful way.

Tony joined the singers from the start of his membership and commented, *“What a great bunch of guys! I look forward to the Saturday practices and have sorely missed them over the last year. The highlights have been making several CDs and of course the performances at the Edinburgh Military Tattoo in 2009, an unforgettable and unrepeatable experience.”*

Tony was one of the founder members of the Carnie Group when it was established in 2007, and has served as the secretary ever since. Tony commented, *“This has been a great eye-opening experience and a wonderful door into Scottish literature for me – long may it continue. I was proud to serve as President in 2010/11 and due to circumstance beyond my control a second term 2011/12. The culmination of my time with the Club was the granting of Life Membership in 2017. This was something I had never considered but have treasured ever since.”*

I will conclude by leaving the last words to Tony, *“What next? I trust we can soon get back to our regular meetings with the attendant socializing and camaraderie. The Carnie Group has continued to meet virtually but it is not the same and I miss the shared drams, and a resumption of singing would be most welcome. Bring it on!!”*



Fort McMurray



Tony, Sheila with Tom and Jack Alexander



Edinburgh Tattoo 2009



President Tony 2011 with Speaker Cam Goodall

ROBERT BURNS & CALGARY (PAUL ARMSTRONG)

(A Little History)

There has been a Burns presence in Calgary for many years. The **Burns Club of Calgary** existed from 1934 to sometime in the early 1950s. To our knowledge, this represents the earliest known organized Burns Club in Calgary. We have acquired a program from one of their annual dinners which was held at the Palliser Hotel on January 25, 1949 to commemorate the 190th anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns.



What happened to this Club after this is a mystery that we have not been able to solve! If anyone can provide us with any more information about this club, we would love to hear it!

As our Club website Home Page explains, “The genesis of the **Calgary Burns Club**, was a Burns Supper in 1964 held in the home of John and Lilian Patterson. This initiated a series of Burns Suppers hosted in turn by other Calgary Scots.” The Club, as we know it today, was created by seven Calgary businessmen and received its charter from the Robert Burns World Federation in 1976. Grant MacEwan was named its patron. The founding members were Andy Gibson, Alistair Ross, Alastair Sinclair, Graham Underwood, Bob Watson, John Whitelock and Jack Whyte. Regrettably, we have lost all of these people over the years and, sadly most recently, Jack Whyte. An article about Jack can be found elsewhere in this publication. Unfortunately, we do not have any information regarding Alastair Sinclair who, apparently, was transferred away from Calgary sometime after the birth of the Club and we have no further knowledge about him. If anyone is able to provide us with any insight on Alastair, we would greatly appreciate it!

EDITORIAL COMMENT (Ron Budd)

Differences in the wording of some of Burns’ poems are not uncommon and most often they account for little or no difference in the meaning of the item. In editing, unless there is an apparent misprint or spelling error I am likely to make no change. If I do make a change it is an attempt to follow what I deem to be nearest to the author’s choice.

I don’t believe at all in anglicising the Scottish poetry of Burns.

Submitted by Ron Budd

BURNS POEM O May, Thy Morn (1791)

O may, thy morn was ne'er so sweet
As the mirk night o' December!
For sparkling was the rosy wine,
And private was the chamber:
And dear was she I dare na name,
But I will aye remember:
And dear was she I dare na name,
But I will aye remember.

And here's to them that, like oursel,
Can push about the jorum!
And here's to them that wish us weel,
May a' that's guid watch o'er 'em!
And here's to them, we dare na tell,
The dearest o' the quorum!
And here's to them, we dare na tell,
The dearest o' the quorum.

OLD SCOTS PROVERB

*“Bees that hae honey in their
mouths, hae stings in their tales. !”*

Roughly translated means: Who
wants to lick honey must not shy
away from the bees.

BURNS POEM

The Banks Of Nith
1789

The Thames flows proudly to the sea,
Where royal cities stately stand;
But sweeter flows the Nith to me,
Where Cummins ance had high command.
When shall I see that honour'd land,
That winding stream I love so dear!
Must wayward Fortune's adverse hand
For ever, ever keep me here!

How lovely, Nith, thy fruitful vales,
Where bounding hawthorns gaily bloom;
And sweetly spread thy sloping dales,
Where lambkins wanton through the broom.
Tho' wandering now must be my doom,
Far from thy bonie banks and braes,
May there my latest hours consume,
Among the friends of early days!

BURNS WORDSEARCH 3 (HENRY CAIRNEY)



Areas mentioned in Robert Burns works

ALLOA

ARNISTON

AUCHENCRUIVE

AYR

BALLOCHMYLE

BANNOCKBURN

BOGHEAD

CRAIGIEBURN

DUNDEE

EDINBURGH

GALLOWAY

GLASGOW

GLENRIDDLE

IRVINE

KELLYBURN

KENMORE

KILMARNOCK

LAGGAN

LAMINGTON

MOSSKNOWE

NITHSDALE

PARNASSUS

TARBOLTON

FUTURE SPEAKERS

2022 Ronnie O'Byrne Director RBWF
2023 Ian McIntyre Past President RBWF
2024 T.B.A.

BURNS ELEGY

Elegy On The Death Of Robert
Ruisseaux. (1785)

Now Robin lies in his last lair,
He'll gabble rhyme, nor sing nae mair;
Cauld poverty, wi' hungry stare,
Nae mair shall fear him;
Nor anxious fear, nor cankert care,
E'er mair come near him.

To tell the truth, they seldom fash'd him,
Except the moment that they crush'd him;
For sune as chance or fate had hush'd 'em
Tho' e'er sae short.
Then wi' a rhyme or sang he lash'd 'em,
And thought it sport.

Tho'he was bred to kintra-wark,
And counted was baith wight and stark,
Yet that was never Robin's mark
To mak a man;
But tell him, he was learn'd and clark,
Ye roos'd him then!

OLD SCOTS PROVERB

*"Beware a sweet talker, he's
dangerous. !"*

I think you can work that one out on
your own!

IN THE NEXT EDITON

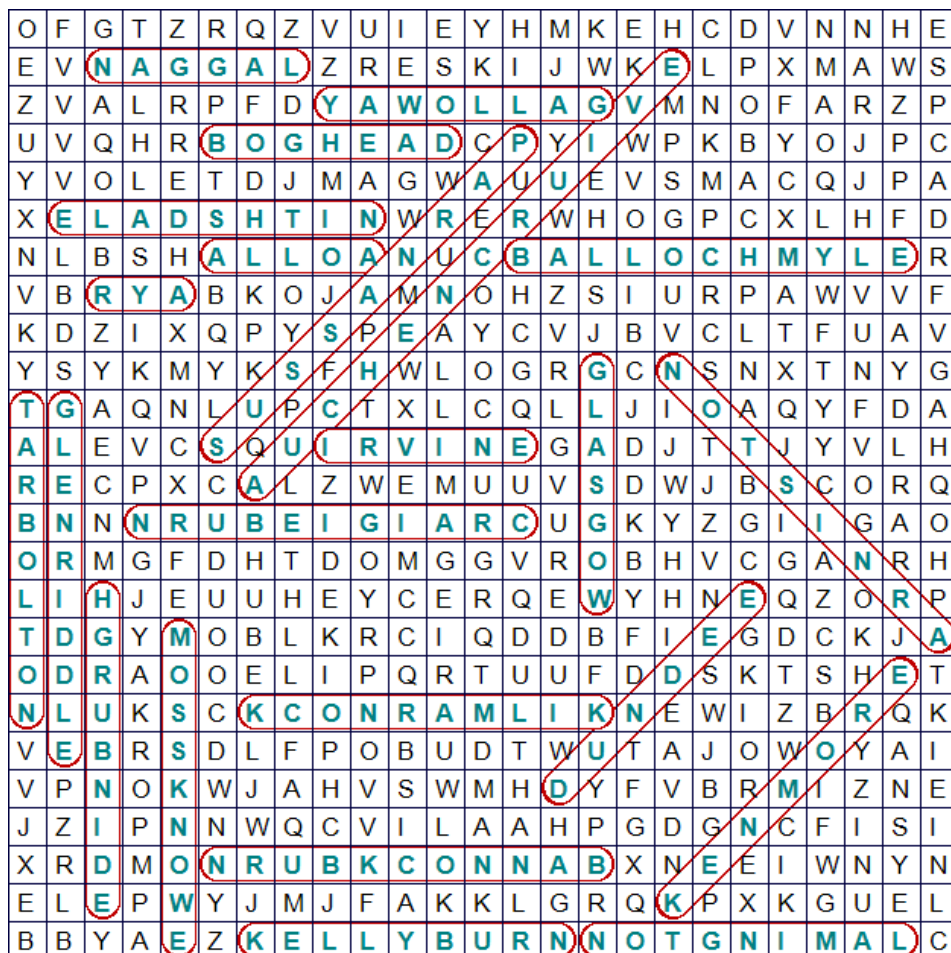
1) Profile of Mr Ron Budd

APPRECIATION

I would like to give thanks to both
Ron Budd and Ian Denness for their
work in proof reading and feedback
with this edition of the Claver. Ron
and Ian have been very vigilant in
ensuring the grammatical quality is
kept to a high standard.

Henry Cairney

BURNS WORDSEARCH 3 (SOLUTION)



WEE WILLIE WINKIE

(Traditional Rhyme submitted by
Shona Cairney)

This was the Ayrshire version we grew up with of the first verse. The original was penned by William Miller in 1841.

Wee Willie Winkie, running through the toon,
Upstairs and doonstairs, in his nightgoon,
Peering through the windows, crying through the locks
Are aw the children in their beds, for its past 8 o'clock

CALGARY CLAVER

Thank you to all contributors.

If you have anything with a Robert Burns, or Scottish cultural interest you would like included in the newsletter, please e-mail Henry Cairney at:

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Editor's Note

The views expressed in the articles are not necessarily those of the Editor, BOD or the Calgary Burns Club at large. Feel free to contact the authors directly for any clarification.

