

# The Tattler

Spring 2016 Edition

## Words from the President

### Officers & Directors

President	Robert Boyd
Vice President	Colin Harris
Secretary/Treasurer	Vacant
Past President	Tony Grogan
Canadian Directors:	Jean Cunningham Tony Grace Ken Montgomery
U S Directors:	Ted Hirtz Leslie Strachan George McClellan
Hon Presidents	May Crawley Jack Mann

### Contacts:

Editor:  
Colin Harris  
92 Avalon Rd  
Winnipeg MB  
R2M 2L5  
editor@rbana.com

Webmaster  
Ron Ballantyne  
3214 Spruce Ave.  
Burlington ON  
L7N 1J2  
contact@rbana.com



The Robert Burns Association of North America

Affiliated with the Robert Burns World Federation Ltd  
Kilmarnock, Scotland  
Club #1024

I have really enjoyed my term as your President, and now that it is nearing an end I've been thinking about how things look for RBANA and for the Burns movement in general.



It's become so clear to me over the past two years that the electronic age has had a profound and ever increasing influence on both.

First the negative side. As I go to Burns events and organize our own, the graying of the membership of societies like ours seems irreversible. One reason is that in this era of Facebook, while the thirst for knowledge remains unabated, it is instant gratification via the Internet that is needed, especially by the younger generation. There is no interest in the monthly face-to-face meetings and seminars that have been our normal practice. We are fortunate that interest in and attendance at Burns Suppers remains so strong. Here in Houston we see an increasing number of less formal lower cost events being held in pubs and restaurants without too much of an impact on the older larger Suppers. This gives us a sufficient base to hang in there, and we can still get a decent turnout for our Annual Meeting.

On the positive side, it clear that interest in Burns is stronger than ever and growing. In January this year I participated in a project run by www.scotland.net to submit "Burnsies", i.e. a selfie taken next to a local Burns monument or other feature. As you can see I used our own H&T "Burns Oscar". This was one of thousands of submissions which were then built into a collage which formed a portrait of our hero. Amazing! Take a look. Then beginning on January 25 I took a MOOCS, which I learn is a large scale online course, on Burns put on by Glasgow University. Both my predecessor Tony Grogan and I graduated from Glasgow decades ago, and it is gratifying to see a highly traditional university transforming itself to keep up with the times. The course itself was led by Gerry Carruthers, who has addressed the last two RBANA Conferences and leads the major Burns research effort at Glasgow. The interactive course was very well-designed and was attended by several thousand. It lasted for three weeks with an hour or two per week required. I learned a lot, as did most of the participants judging from the comments. Well done GU! On a broader front, the availability of Burns resources on the Web has to be a good thing, and our own RBANA website seeks

In This Issue:	
President's Message .....	1
Gaelic Burns Book .....	2
Dallas Ready for RBANA .....	3
Board Nominees .....	3
Southfork Ranch .....	7
DFW Sights .....	7
The Hume Trophy .....	8
Irish Writer Writes Burns Book ....	8
Website "No Richt" .....	9

(Continued on page 2)

## Words from the President

(Continued from page 1)

to build on this. We need it for our future.

It is most appropriate for me to be able to round out my term as RBANA President by hosting the 36th Annual AGM & Conference here in Texas. We have a decent attendance in spite of the impact of the weaker C\$ on costs for those from north of the border. We are looking forward to seeing you all there.

Yours Aye  
Robert Boyd

## Work of Robert Burns Translated into Gaelic Gifted to Historic Strathearn Library

**S**rathearn's historic Innerpeffray Library has a new addition to its treasured collection.

It has been given the works of Robert Burns, translated into Gaelic by the Rev Roderick Macdonald.

Peter Hughes, president of the Robert Burns World Federation, presented the rare book to Scotland's oldest lending library on January 23.

He said: "Robert Burns was not a Gaelic speaker but at the time of Burns Gaelic was certainly spoken throughout Perthshire and continued to be a spoken language in daily usage when, three generations ago, the language of education became English.

"Burns would certainly hear the language as he travelled through Perthshire and Argyllshire and on his sojourn to Inverness. He would also hear it from the cattle drovers who travelled from the Highlands to markets in Ayrshire.

"He also borrowed and used 10 Gaelic tunes and set his own words to them. He even called his pet collie dog Luath, meaning fast.

"It is strange to reflect that a spoken language can become increasingly rare within a space of 100 years.

"Within the Robert Burns World Federation we have a commitment to stimulate interest in Robert Burns among all age groups and it is significant to note that we have over 70,000 school pupils taking part in our annual schools competitions.

"Within Perth and Kinross area there is Gaelic medium education, Gaelic learners education and also early years provision in Perth and Highland Perthshire.



"The translation of the complete works of Burns is by the late Rev Roderick Macdonald, a Gaelic speaker from North Uist who was a Church of Scotland minister. This book is out of print but here it will have a permanent home.

"We do hope that this book will inspire not only school pupils but everyone interested in languages to use the facilities of

this famous library and also learn more about Burns through the medium of Gaelic and this book."

Lara Haggerty, keeper of books at Innerpeffray, said: "We are delighted to accept this work from the Robert Burns World Federation which will be a wonderful resource for visitors to Innerpeffray.

"It will also complement the other rare editions of Burns gifted to the library in 2012 by Janet St Germain."

The Library of Innerpeffray was founded in 1680 and is now a museum.

Robert Burns visited the area around Strathearn in 1787, staying with the Murrays of Ochtertyre. He wrote about the landscape around Crieff in 'On Scaring Some Water Fowl on Loch Turit', and immortalised Euphemia Murray in 'Blythe was She'.

# Dallas—Fort Worth Prepares to Welcome RBANA

A great turnout is expected when Dallas-Fort Worth play host to the 2016 RBANA Conference and AGM.

The Dallas/Fort Worth Airport Marriott North, our venue, is a recently-refurbished full-service hotel. It is located about five minutes from DFW International Airport, from which there is frequent free shuttle service from all terminals. There is also ample free parking onsite for private cars. WiFi is complimentary for delegates.

The Conference will follow the established format. On Friday there will be a Golf Tournament in the morning, Directors' Meeting in the afternoon, and an informal dinner and ceilidh in the evening. On Saturday, the AGM will be held in the morning, Burns seminars and the Dr Jim Conner Memorial Quiz in the afternoon, and the formal Burns Dinner in the evening, including the installation of the new president.

Federation President Peter Hughes will be among the overseas attendees.

There will be a church service on Sunday morning. All conference events are in the hotel. The Golf Tournament is being coordinated by Ronnie O'Byrne who kindly agreed to assist the committee. Details will be finalized once the numbers are known.



There is plenty to see and do outside the meeting. The JFK Book Depository Museum, George W Bush Presidential Library, Six Flags Theme Park, the Mustangs of Las Colinas sculpture by Robert Glen, the historic Fort Worth stockyard area, Southfork Ranch of TV fame, world class museums and shopping are all nearby and most can be reached by the excellent light rail system from DFW. For those taking extra time, Austin and San Antonio are very drivable.



**THINK  
BURNS**

# New Board to Take Office in Dallas

With the end of the Dallas conference, a new Board will take office for the coming two years. Nominations having closed 45 prior to the meeting, there are acclamations for the position of President, Vice President, and the 3 U.S. Director positions. There will be an election for Canadian Director, as five nominations have been received for the three positions.

The Tattler presents the following profile of the incoming RBANA Board candidates:

## President                      Colin Harris



Colin Harris is a well kent name and face at both RBANA and Federation meetings. A Past President, and Honorary Life Member of the Winnipeg Robert Burns Club, he has served as its Secretary, Webmaster, and Newsletter Editor for the past several years. He served as Chair of the club's Supper Committee for several years, and as "wise elder" for the past two years. He was involved with the planning committees for the 2007 Federation Conference and the 2011 RBANA Conference.

With RBANA he has served as Canadian Director, Secretary/Treasurer, and is completing his second, non-consecutive, term as Vice President. He has also served as Editor of the Tattler since 2010, succeeding the late Frank Campbell.

## Vice President              Ken Montgomery



Ken Montgomery was born and raised in Edmonton, Alberta with roots back to the Mull of Kintyre in Argyllshire. In 1769 his family immigrated to the British colony of St. John's Island (later renamed Prince Edward Island) and claims that island's famous authoress, Lucy Maud Montgomery (Anne of

Green Gables) as a distant cousin. In 1898 the family then moved to Western Canada. Ken, the oldest of five boys,

and the father of three more boys served with the Edmonton Police Service. Retiring as a detective in 2000 he and his wife Brenda then relocated to the smaller city of Medicine Hat, Alberta establishing a court agent and paralegal business. Ken, a longtime attendee to the annual Edmonton Burns Club dinners, when living in Edmonton, has had an interest in Scottish culture and Burns since a wee lad. On arriving in Medicine Hat he was disappointed to learn there was no Burns club, and so, with a few like-minded individuals, took steps to create one. He is a past president and remains involved as the Club's secretary.

## US Director                      Les. Strachan



Born in the heart of Burns Country, in Kilmarnock, Leslie Strachan is no stranger to RBANA members, having been a US Director in the early part of the last decade before returning four years ago. Moving to the

United States in 1973, the same year he married Nan-

cy, he has been a frequent speaker and performer at Burns suppers since the early 1980s, as well as spreading the Burns message through the schools and wider community for the past 25 years. Les has also joined the Board of the Burns Federation as US Director, succeeding Mac Irvin. He is an individual member of both the Burns Federation (since 1994) and RBANA (since 1999).

## New Board (Continued)

### US Director **Ted Hirtz**



**T**ed Hirtz should also be familiar to long-time RBANA members, the long tall Texan served as a U.S. Director in the last decade, and returned following the Williamsburg conference. A Houston lawyer, he is a Past Chieftain of Houston's Heather & Thistle Club.

Retiring to Calgary in 2001, he soon joined the Calgary Burns Club as well as the Schiehallion Scottish Cultural Society, serving on the committees of both, with a double term as president of the Burns Club as well as being the current president of Schiehallion.

He has been an active member of the Calgary Burns Club Singers who have published two CDs and was part of the group that performed at the Edinburgh Military Tattoo in 2009. He is also a member of the Club's Carnie Group which meets regularly to discuss aspects of Scottish Literature particularly around the times and works of Robert Burns.

### US Director **George McClellan**



**G**eorge G. McClellan describes himself as a restless man of adventure. He is an army veteran and a retired Special Agent of the NCIS. He has a long background in law enforcement including five years with the California Highway Patrol, and one year with the International Police Task Force in the former Yugoslavia. He is a writer, amateur historian, bagpiper, motorcyclists and world traveller.

He is a member of a number of organizations, among them, the Robert Burns Club of Atlanta, and the Robert Burns World Federation. A writer, McClellan has a biography on Robert Burns in the editing - publishing process. McClellan and family, natives of California, have lived in the Philippines, Florida, Hawaii, and the United Kingdom. He and his wife have resided in Ellijay, Ga. since 1999.

### Canadian Director **Dr. Tony Grogan**



**T**ony Grogan is no stranger to RBANA members, having served as President. A native of Milngavie in East Dumbartonshire, Tony graduated in medicine from Glasgow University, and worked in General Practice in Western Scotland before emigrating to Canada, where he continued his practice, in

Winnipeg, and his new hometown of Teulon, and as a Medical Examiner in the Teulon area north of Winnipeg. Introduced to Robert Burns during school trips to Ayrshire, Tony started annual Burns Suppers in Teulon in 1985 which he continued to organize until 1993. Joining the Winnipeg Robert Burns Club, he served on the Board. A noted raconteur he has appeared at numerous Burns Suppers, in Manitoba, and in Texas, where he has spent the last few winters. He is a Past President of the Manitoba Highland Gathering, has served on Winnipeg's St Andrew's Society Board of Managers for several years.

### Canadian Director **Tony Grace**



**A**n incumbent seeking a second term, Tony's interests in things Scottish started during his first trip; to attend the University of St. Andrews. He lived in Scotland for over 8 years and it was there that he met his wife. On emigrating to Canada, he spent most of the next 30 plus years in Fort McMurray in northern

Alberta, where he gravitated toward Scots ex-Pats. His Scottish wife joined the Burns Club there, but due to their constitution allowing no more than one member per family, Tony watched from the sidelines as it were, attending their functions and in particular the annual Burns Suppers, giving him an excellent grounding in Scottish literature generally and the Burns works in particular.

### Canadian Director **Janet Thompson**



**A** native of Paisley, Janet Thompson has been active in a number of Scottish organizations in Winnipeg, including the United Scottish Association, where she served as Treasurer for six years, and the Sons of Scotland Benevolent Association, where she is a Past Chief, and Treasurer of Melrose Camp.. A member of the Winnipeg

Burns Club board since 2009, she served as Treasurer for 4 years. She had previously been involved with the organization of the 2007 Federation conference, working with Don Rennicks on transporting delegates from the airport, and has represented the club at a Federation conference.

## New Board (Continued)

### Canadian Director **Don Rennicks**



**D**onald J Rennicks is no stranger to RBANA having previously served a term as Canadian Director, and briefly as Secretary/Treasurer. A second generation Scot, whose father was born in Skelmorlie, North Ayrshire, Don has recently completed a full term, and a half as President of the Winnipeg Robert Burns Club, having succeeded to the post originally upon the death of his predecessor, Lawrence Cormack. He has also served as Chief of Melrose Camp, Sons of Scotland Benevolent Association, has served on the Winnipeg's St Andrew's Society Board of Managers for several years, as well as the Board of the Scottish Heritage Council of Manitoba

An electrician by training, Don worked as a civilian contractor for the Canadian Armed Forces for much of his career.

### Canadian Director **Maj Andy Harrower**



**A**ndy was born in Alva, Clackmannanshire, Scotland, where most of his family still reside. Joining the army at 16 as an apprentice mechanic, he worked his way up the ranks to commission in 1999 as an electro-mechanical engineer. Completing a further 12 years with the British Army, Andy transferred to the Canadian Royal Electrical & Mechanical Engineers in 2012 and is still serving, currently in Yellowknife, NT.

Andy developed an interest in Robert Burns during his early years with the forces and has attended and organized

many Burns events ever since; Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia and Morocco being some of the more obscure locations amongst them. He joined the Medicine Hat Burns Club in 2008 and has been an active member of the committee in various roles and was one of the founders of the Jolly Beggars. His recent move to Yellowknife has afforded him the opportunity to introduce Robert Burns to the military community up there and he has already become involved with local Burns enthusiasts on the 2017 program north of 60!

Andy is an avid skier which he claims to do well, and a keen golfer, which he admits to being very poor at! He is married to Kim and they have five daughters.

### Past President **Dr. Robert Boyd**



**R**obert Boyd is a native of Ayrshire, Burns Country, and was educated at the Ayr Academy, and at Glasgow and Warwick Universities. Emigrating to Houston Texas, a quarter of a century ago, he is now in semi-retirement having sold his publishing business in the oil and gas industry two years ago. A life-long Burns enthusiast, Robert joined the Heather & Thistle Society of Houston soon after arriving there. He is a Past Chieftain and has been secretary of its Burns Club for over 20 years. Robert and his wife Irene were the main organizers of the 2008 RBANA conference and he has been a US Director of RBANA since 2008, and President for the past two years.

**T**he position of Secretary-Treasurer will remain vacant with no nominees registered. The board will deal with the position following the election.

## Ewing Ranch Among The Sights to See in Dallas-Fort Worth

For those who are spending some extra time in the area, just over half an hour's drive from the Conference Hotel is the famed Southfork Ranch, home of the fictional Ewings of "Dallas:". For thirteen years, television sets were tuned into 356 episodes of one of the longest running series in North American television history. Viewers

made themselves at home at Southfork, the ranch the Ewings called home and where the world was a weekly guest. Now you can visit this famous Texas



come to see where "Dallas" was filmed and to experience the lifestyle made famous by the Ewings.

Southfork is open daily, year round, to individual travelers, or groups, for guided tours of the ranch. Tour the famed Ewing Mansion and re-live exciting moments from the series in the "Dallas Legends" exhibit, featuring an

exciting array of memorabilia from the series. See the gun that shot J.R., Lucy's Wedding Dress, the "Dallas" Family Tree, and Jock's Lincoln Continental. Relax on a guided tour of the ranch grounds. Eat at Miss Ellie's Deli and shop in two themed retail stores, offering a diverse selection of clothing, accessories, gifts, and collectibles. Tours depart the Visitors Center approximately every 30-45 minutes, and run continuously throughout the day from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. The last guided tour of the day begins at 4:15 pm every day.



ranch in person and see for yourself the lifestyle portrayed in the series.

Today, Southfork continues to welcome visitors from around the world, who

There are a number of other sights to see, both in Dallas and Fort Worth, and the surrounding area.

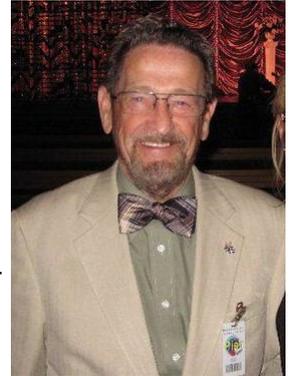


For those interested in local American history the infamous Texas Schoolbook Depository building, now the Dallas County Administration Building, sits in downtown Dallas overlooking Dealey Plaza and the famous grassy knoll. It houses the Sixth Floor Museum, which, of course, is dedicated to the life, times, death and legacy of John F Kennedy.

There are numerous other world class museums in Dallas, and the historic stockyard area in Fort Worth, not to mention the shopping. And for hockey fans, chances are good that the Dallas Stars will still be playing, so you may get to catch some playoff hockey.

## RBANA Poets Compete for Hume

Houston, and RBANA stalwart Jack Hume has presented the association with a new trophy, to be known as the Jack Hume Heather & Thistle Trophy. This trophy will be awarded at the Dallas conference, and annually thereafter, for the composition of poetry in the style of Robert Burns. The poems submitted must be original, and not previously published. Entries submitted by non-RBANA members will be judged by the panel, but only RBANA members in good standing are eligible to win the trophy. The panel, who will blindly judge the entries are trophy donor Jack Hume, RBANA and Federation US Director Leslie Strachan, and Federation representative Willie Gibson. The winner need not be present to win. Entries must be submitted by April 1, 2016, to [ireneandrobertboyd@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ireneandrobertboyd@sbcglobal.net)



## Irish Writer Publishes New Book on Burns

A Donegal writer and broadcaster who grew up on stories of Robert Burns has published a new, 400-page biography of the beloved Scottish poet.

“Rabbie Burns: An Nasc le hÉirinn”, by Pádraig Ó Baoighill, was launched on Friday, March 11, in Rann na Feirste.

Written in Irish, the book explores Burns’ life, works, songs and politics, with a particular focus on his links with Ireland.

Ó Baoighill new work also discusses the 18th-century poet’s influence on the work of famed writers from the Donegal Gaeltacht, including Séamus Ó Grianna, and his links to the Scottish Gaelic language.

“It’s the first biography of Burns written in the Irish language and there is quite a good lot of material translated into [Scottish] Gaelic,” Ó Baoighill said.

Ó Baoighill remembered being introduced to Burns work when he was 9 or 10 and one of his uncles returned from Scotland, where he was a gardener on a farm outside Edinburgh. He brought with him three books, one of them about Burns.

At that point the young Pádraig wasn’t a good English reader, though he read every book in Irish. Still, they were happy to see the books from Scotland.

“We had nothing at home in Rann na Feirste, and would be glad to see the three books,” he said.

Later, in 1952, when Pádraig was working in Scotland, he bought a book on the poet, “There Was a Lad” by Hilton

Brown, which inspired him to seek further information on the poet’s complex character.

“I think I read that book in one or two nights,” he said. And from then on, he said, “Any time I was in Scotland, if I saw a book, I bought it.”

In the same way, people from Donegal working in Ayrshire would hear stories of Burns and bring them home, Pádraig said, adding, “And when they came home you would hear those stories in the céilí houses in Rann na Feirste.

“I used to visit relations and heard many songs and many stories about Burns,” he recalled.

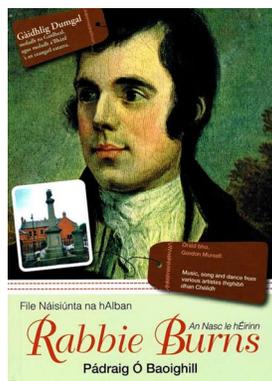
He had decided to write a short work on the character of Burns but his publisher suggested he undertake a longer, academic biography.

While Pádraig does not provide a critical study of Burns’ poetry, he does offer a detailed exploration of the poet’s character and colourful life.

Speaking at a launch of the book in Glasgow earlier this month, Pádraig said the work, “could be referred to as a travel book on the life of Scotland’s national poet, from his birth on a wild night in Alloway, to Mount Oliphant and the hard work as a young boy on his father’s farm, to Lochlea, Tarbolton and Mauchline.”

“I researched it inside and out and travelled all over Scotland.” He began the work about four years ago.

“Rabbie Burns: An Nasc le hÉirinn” is Pádraig’s 16th book; in all he has produced more than 20 publications.



## Scots Language Website Is “No Richt”

The Scottish Government website dedicated to the language of Robert Burns is littered with errors. Officials have admitted that the Scots language website has words that have been mixed together and some that do not even exist, such as “wirhameowerdeainsan” and “feckfupairt”.

Michael Hance, director of the Scots Language Centre, said: “It’s clearly not been edited correctly as some words don’t mean anything at all.

“Something has clearly got lost in translation somewhere along the line.”

He added: “It would appear that whoever was commissioned to write it didn’t have the chance to check it before it went online.

“It’s unfortunate because it’s likely that people went onto the site and thought, because they couldn’t make sense of some words, that they didn’t have a proper grasp of Scots.”

One sentence on the government website reads: “Scots is aaroon us in wirhameowerdaeinsan it is a furthie, feck-fupairt o Scottish culture the day.”

It is thought to mean: “Scots is around us wherever we go, whatever we are doing, and is a vibrant part of Scottish culture today.”

Both Mr Hance and Scottish Language Dictionaries senior editor Pauline Cairns said “wirhameowerdaeinsan”, was not a Scots word.

Ms Cairns said: “I think it’s great that the Scottish government is promoting Scots, but this is “no richt”.

“There’s either been an error with cutting and pasting or no Scots speaker has proof read it once it was put up. “Quite a few of the words appear to have been run together.”

Around 1.5million people still speak Scots, once respected for being among the great literary languages of Europe.

Scots is officially recognised a language by both the UK and Scottish governments, although it is often mistaken for slang.

In the middle ages, it was seen as a great literary language and was used by Scottish national bard Robert Burns in his poems and songs.

Later, intellectuals stopped using it in their writing and speaking and children were

beaten for using it in classrooms as late as the 1970s.

It has many dialects including Glaswegian, Doric, Ayrshire and Shetland.

In the last census, 1.5million people were recorded as regularly speaking it. Only around another 58,000 speak Gaelic.

A Scottish Government spokesman said: “We recognise the Scots language is an essential part of our distinctive culture and heritage and we take seriously its promotion and preservation.”

He thanked eagle-eyed Scots speakers for bringing what he called “minor formatting errors” to their attention.

He added: “We will correct these as part of a review of these pages at the earliest opportunity.”



## Hope to see you all in Dallas-Fort Worth