



The Tattler

Winter 2017 Edition

Words from the President

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Hon Presidents	May Crawley Jack Mann Jim Cunningham Jean Cunningham Ron Ballantyne Chrys Ballantyne

Contacts:

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

Webmaster
Robert Boyd
13911 Queensberry Ln.
Houston TX
77079-3322
contact@rbana.com



The Robert Burns Association
of North America

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

It is fortunate that I like what Burns called the “Chieftain of the Pudding Race” as I had the unique experience this year of attending 4 different Burns Suppers. I was impressed with the attendance of the two I attended, in Calgary, and in Edmonton, each with more than 500. Reports from Medicine Hat (see page 6) of more than 200, shows that the Burns movement is strong indeed in Alberta, despite the economic situation. It was encouraging also to see Scott Montgomery, the Edmonton president, making his way south to join the Calgary club for their event, and Henry Cairney and several members from Calgary returning the favour travelling north, along with Bill Cocks from Medicine Hat for Edmonton’s big night. The rivalry between the cities is legendary, but Robert Burns can bring them together.

My home club, while not boasting numbers close to those in the west, had, strong numbers as well, considering it was midweek, relative to other years.

The fourth one I attended, and performed the Address to a Haggis, was put on by a youth pipe band. In a church hall, rather than a hotel, or convention centre, like so many, had well over 100, many, apparently at the last minute.

Whether in a hotel, convention centre, church hall, or private home, I hope your own celebrations went well. Robert Boyd would appreciate a report for the website.

I am looking forward to travelling west again in just a few weeks to join you all in Medicine Hat for the RBANA Conference. I’ve been in Medicine Hat before and know what Ken Montgomery, Craig Elder and company are capable of. If you haven’t yet made your plans, don’t wait much longer. It promises to be a good weekend.

Yours Aye
Colin Harris



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Medicine Hat Prepares to Welcome RBANA

The weekend of April 28–30, 2017 is fast approaching.

The Medicine Hat Burns Club is busy making preparations to welcome everyone that weekend to the 2017 RBANA AGM.

We encourage those attending from outside Alberta to consider making attendance at this event part of a vacation getaway as this is a perfect opportunity to take in a visit to the Rocky Mountains and Banff or the world famous Royal Tyrell Museum of Palaeontology at Drumheller.

Our base hotel for the 2017 function is the Clarion Inn & Conference Centre located at 954-7th Street SW, Medicine Hat, right on the Trans-Canada Highway. Reservations can be made by going to guest-services@clarionmh.ca or calling 1.403.527-8844 and referring to RBANA 2017.



The Conference will formally begin on Friday evening with a Ceilidh at the city's historic Cypress Club. Following breakfast, the AGM will begin promptly at 10:00 on Saturday morning. Following lunch, which will be available at the hotel, the afternoon session will include the usual seminar sessions and the Dr Jim Connor Memorial Quiz. The primary seminar workshop will be a panel chaired by RBANA Vice-President Ken Montgomery on "Surviving & Prospering in the New Age", a valuable session for all member

clubs.

The evening will end with the formal dinner, at the hotel.

Registration and more information for the conference is available on-line at mhburnsclub.ca—with a direct link from the RBANA website.

Please Note: REGISTRATION DEADLINE is APRIL 15, 2017

Travelling to the Conference:

By air: The Medicine Hat Airport (5 minutes from the hotel) is served by Air Canada out of Calgary.

Prairie Sprinter operate a twice a day shuttle from Calgary Airport (pre book on line – link provided on the Medicine Hat Burns Club website)

By car:

The Clarion Hotel is a 3 hour drive south east from Calgary, on the Trans Canada Highway, or 4 hours north from Great Falls Montana.

Spouses

Not going to the AGM?

**Can we interest you in a City Tour?
9:00 – 11:30 Saturday.**

View the World's Largest Tee Pee, Medalta Clay Potteries Historic site, historic downtown Medicine Hat and Medicine Hat College on this mini tour of our prairie city.

Price will be dependent on demand. If interested in the tour please register so we can determine demand.

2nd Annual Hume Poetry Competition Open for Entries

The Jack Hume Heather & Thistle Trophy, presented to RBANA by Jack Hume, long time member from Houston, Texas, is awarded annually for writing poetry in the style of Robert Burns.

Entries are invited for the 2017 competition, under the following rules and conditions:

- Poems submitted must be original, and not previously published.
- Only RBANA members in good standing are eligible to win the trophy.
- Entries from non-RBANA members will be judged by the panel but are not eligible to win the trophy
- The winner will be chosen by a three member panel comprising **Jack Hume**, RBWF representative **Willie Gibson** and RBWF Canadian Director, and 2016 Hume Trophy winner **Ronnie O'Byrne**. Entries will be submitted to the panel anonymously by the Secretary, and the panel's decision will be final.
- The winner will be announced and the trophy presented at the RBANA AGM & Conference 20127 in Medicine Hat in April.
- The winner need not be present. The trophy will be mailed to the winner if not present.
- This trophy will be awarded annually. The winner is responsible for returning the trophy to the RBANA Secretary prior to the 2018 AGM and Conference
- Entries should be submitted by email to ireneandrobertboyd@sbcglobal.net
- **The deadline for entries is April 1, 2017**
- The winning entry will be published in the summer edition of the RBANA Tattler.



2016 Winner Ronnie O'Byrne,
with the Hume trophy

Support RBANA 2017

Consider becoming a Conference Sponsor

Gold Level \$500.00

Gold Level Sponsors will be recognized in the conference program, verbally recognized during events and welcomed to speak briefly at the conference if so desired.

Silver Level \$250.00

Silver Level Sponsors will be featured in the conference program and thanked verbally throughout conference events.

Bronze Level \$100.00

Bronze Level Sponsors will be featured in our conference program.

Add the desired level to your cart when you register.



The Medicine Hat
Burns Club
&
RBANA
Thank You



Paisley Museum Shows Rediscovered Robert Burns Manuscript

A rediscovered original Robert Burns manuscript has gone on display at a Renfrewshire museum in this new year.

The short verse has been in Paisley Museum and Art Gallery's collection for almost 100 years.

It was verified last year by Professor Gerard Carruthers of Glasgow University Centre for Robert Burns Studies.

The parchment went on display at the museum in January to coincide with Burns Night and when light levels are low enough to protect the delicate ink.

The verse, which was written in reply to a party invitation, is said to be in typical

Burns style and uses wordplay combining the tradition for indicating the day of writing, with something that suggests he is worse for wear, in "Foorsday".

The Bard also highlights his joy at the invitation and promises to attend whether by horse or by cart.

Prof Carruthers said: "The manuscript is clearly in the handwriting of Robert Burns. The ink and paper

are a good match to other authentic Burns manuscript productions.

"The poem dates from 1785 to 1786.

"The first publication to give an indication of its origins and how it came to be in the collection of Paisley Library is The Works of Robert Burns Volumes 1-5, edited by The Ettrick Shepherd and William Motherwell."



The poem will be on display annually at the museum between 17 January and February 19.

Councillor Jim Harte, chairman of Renfrewshire Leisure, said: "I am absolutely delighted that the only existing manuscript of a lovely piece of Burns social verse

will be on display in Paisley Museum in the new year for a limited period and each subsequent January thereafter.

"We are proud to possess this charming piece and thrilled to share it with visitors during what is an extremely important time for Scotland's largest town."



April 28 - 30

Clarion Hotel

For Information and Registration:

www.rbana.org

Medicine Hat Club Hold Unique Burns Supper

Well, we are pleased. Another great event in Medicine Hat on the last day of January. You don't want to know how well we did on our World Famous Scotch Bar, but as a fund raising effort, BRILLIANT. Other clubs should be looking at this initiative because IT WORKS!!!

It was also a pleasure to have the Commander of the local British Army Training Unit Suffield (BATUS), Colonel Marcus Evans do the address to the haggis. He was very, very good!!!!!!

We even got coverage in the newspaper. Of course, as usual the media is not accurate. They say we sat over 100. We actually sat over 200. They say the mayor (Ted Clugston) was going to do Burns famous ‘Toast to the Queen’. Well, there I don’t have to say any more.....

In any event a grand time was had by all and we are now going full bore for the RBANA AGM in April

Submitted by Ken Montgomery



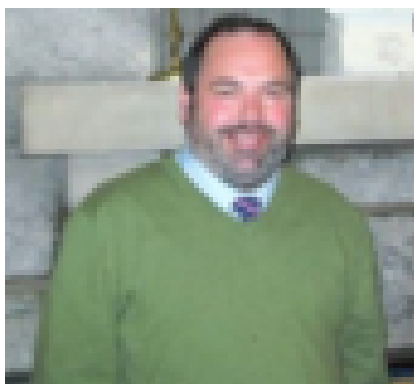
The newspaper article (left) Col Marcus Evans (BATUS) examines the kukri knife (above) before Addressing the Haggis (bottom left), assisted by Major John Hallet, Royal Canadian Artillery (with the claymore) and club piper Malcolm Sissons. They are joined in the toast (below right) by the Chef, and Poosie Nancy



Glasgow University Gets £1,000,000 Funding for Robert Burns Research

The world renowned Centre for Robert Burns Studies at the University of Glasgow has secured a £1m research grant for Phase 2 of 'Editing Burns for the 21st Century'.

The research grant, from the Arts and Humanities Research Council, will fund the next five years of the project, which will focus on Burns' letters and correspondence as well as his poetry.



Reacting to the news, Professor Gerard Carruthers, (left) General Editor of the Oxford Edition of the works of Robert Burns, called it "tremendous news."

"The funding means we will complete the entire

OUP edition of Burns with full-time research support and a world-class website to serve it. As well as three volumes of Burns Correspondence and two of Poetry we'll also be producing the Oxford Handbook to Robert Burns (forty critical essays based on and around the edition) and web-workshops on editing Burns and on Burns forgery."

He continued, say that the project "is fundamental to the understanding of the writings that Burns left behind. Our team will use many more manuscripts, many more print sources and many more items of information than any previous editors. It allows us at last to produce a thorough and complete edition of Burns across ten volumes. Scotland's national bard, a world-writer as well, deserves nothing less."

'Editing Burns for the 21st Century' at the University of Glasgow began in 2009, the 250th anniversary of the poet's birth, with the signing of the contract with OUP.

Professor Roibeard Ó Maolalaigh, Vice Principal and Head of the College of Arts, said: "This latest

major AHRC award, building on the success of a previous large AHRC grant, reinforces the University of Glasgow as the world-leading centre for the study of our national poet, Robert Burns.

"Professor Gerry Carruthers and his team will bring to light for the first time through publications and innovative workshops fresh materials based on new manuscript and print material discoveries, which will transform our understanding of the man and the poet."

In January 2011 the Centre was awarded the equivalent of £1.1 million by the AHRC. The grant underpinned the first 5 years of the project, which has produced the first volumes of the edition.

Burns' Prose, edited by Nigel Leask, Regius Professor of English Literature at the University of Glasgow (published 2014)

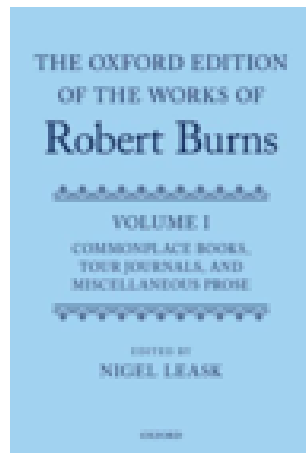
Burns' Songs for James Johnson, edited by Murray Pittock, Bradley Professor of English Literature also at the University of Glasgow (currently at press for 2017 publication).

Burns' Songs for George Thomson, edited by Dr.

Kirsteen McCue, who is Co-Director of the Centre for Robert Burns Studies (being completed for 2018 publication).

Published by Oxford University Press, Phase 1 of the project has just completed, ending with research into Burns' songs, stripping back the music to how it would have originally sounded. (See Autumn edition of the Tattler)

The latest funding will underpin research at the Centre for Robert Burns Studies for the next five years. It is estimated the project overall will take at least 15 years to complete.



New Glasgow University Project Asks: Was Robert Burns Bipolar?

Robert Burns famously wrote of mood swings and bouts of melancholy which he described as “blue devilism”.

Now experts are using modern psychiatry methods to analyse the mind of Robert Burns and settle the question of whether he may have had a mental health illness.

The project being carried out at Glasgow University is examining everything from the Bard’s letters to his relationships and everyday activities in a bid to establish if he had a psychiatric disorder.

Moira Hansen, (right) principal researcher and PhD student on the project, said the belief he could have suffered from recurrent depression was first suggested by academics in the 1990s.

She said: “What really makes our project different and new is the vast majority of our data is coming from Burns himself, through his letters, his journals and his commonplace books.

“What we have done is to build a methodology based on the modern clinical standards used in relation to mood disorders and we have identified 12 different areas across activity, behaviour and state of mind.

She added: “From that we can go through and track all of his correspondence and highlight points in his life which look interesting as he might be suffering from abnormal moods which might be clinically significant”

Hansen said this included looking at aspects of his life such as his social appearances and behaviour, how much sleep he appeared to be getting, his alcohol consumption and his extra-marital affairs.

She said bouts of apparent depression could be pinpointed.

An example of this is in December 1786, when Burns was a rising star of the Edinburgh literary scene, but he wrote pessimistic letters which complained of headaches.

Hansen added: “By January 1787, he is writing to a friend saying I would really just like to go back to farming.

“It is an interesting juxtaposition where you think everything should be wonderful and he should be high as a kite, but actually what we are seeing is someone who is going out and doing what he needs to do to make a living and really putting a brave face on it.

“When you read modern accounts of people who are affected by depression, that is a theme you hear repeated over and over again.”

The initial findings of the four-year project, which is funded until 2019, was presented at a conference held by the University of Glasgow’s Centre for Robert Burns Studies at the Robert

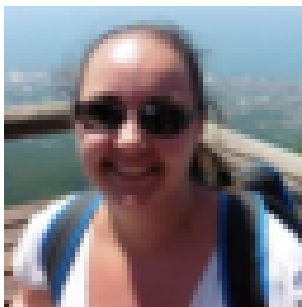
Burns Birthplace Museum in Ayr in mid January. Hansen believes there is compelling evidence for Burns suffering recurrent depression, but more research is needed to establish if he also had bouts of mania which may point to a diagnosis of bipolar disorder.

However she added trying to establish if Burns had a mental health condition was only one aspect of the project, which would result in a new understanding of his mood state in the last ten years of his life and how it affected his life and creativity.

She added: “We are not looking to apply labels, it is about getting a better understanding of the individual.

“It is really only now perhaps we can actually start looking at this as we are seeing real progress made in the destigmatisation of mental health issues.

“Another aspect of the project which is really important is that talking about Robert Burns and his mental health gets people talking about their own mental health – and recognising people may have issues with their mental health but that does not define who they are.”



Businessman Translates Burns Into Tamil

As Scots, and others, around the world, celebrate the life of Robert Burns, his work continues to win new fans in unlikely corners of the world. His poems have always held international appeal. They were translated into most European languages by the late 19th century, with an entire book on the subject - Robert Burns in Other Tongues - appearing in 1896.

Such was his fame in the Soviet Union, communist officials approved the translation of more than 200 of Burns' works into Russian, with the resulting collection selling 60,000 copies when published in 1924.

Now Tamil - a language spoken by more than 70 million people - can be added to the growing list of Burns translations, thanks to the efforts of Reza Ali. The businessman from India translated A Man's A Man For A' That into his native language after spending time working in Glasgow in 2015. Ali returned to Scotland this past October to perform his work at Greenock Burns Club - and hopes the translation will help spread Burns' name in his home country as well as Singapore, where he now lives. "I don't think he is particularly well-known in India," Ali said, in an interview in The Scotsman. "However, I have learned that in the very early days of the British Raj, Burns was popular in some areas such as Bengal, but since then there has never been any resurgence of Burns in the subcontinent. "This is a pity because Burns offers something I think will benefit India and her sense of

egalitarianism, pluralism, liberty and beauty. Burns captures the essence of all of these ideals and his messages will resonate strongly across India. "I was unable to find any other Tamil translations of any of Burns' work and so sought to undertake a translation of 'A Man's a Man for A that', as it is one of my favourites." The project was not without its challenges. "It was extremely difficult to say the least," added Ali. "I had a first draft, which my



mother helped refine and improve. I've since sent it to the head Tamil specialist at the Singapore Parliament, to review my translation." He continued: "It's easier to convey the spirit of the poem - the messages of brotherhood are universal and the strength of the message has been retained in the Tamil version. "I also made it a point to first review

my understanding of the Scots with Raymond Jack of the Mother Club to ensure it was accurate prior to translating." Having completed his work, Ali felt it appropriate to present a copy to the Greenock club, which was founded in 1801. "During my time in Glasgow, I made it a point to visit as much of Scotland as I could," he added. "I visited Alloway and bought one of the limited editions of the re-printed Kilmarnock editions. "I was explaining to Raymond how profound I found Burns to be and he made it a point to invite me to the Mother Club Burns' Supper last year. "I was so moved by the passion they had for Burns. It was then I decided I wanted to present them with something unique and hence the translation."

The Editor requests that all submissions for consideration for publication in The Tattler be made as an attachment to email in either .pdf or Word format. Thank you.

