

CALGARY BURNS CLUB ANNUAL DINNER
JANUARY 19, 2018
(Jim Hutchens)

Our annual celebration of the birth of the Bard was held at the Calgary Telus Convention Centre on Friday January 19, 2018 with 534 well-dressed gentlemen in attendance.

The evening opened with the Calgary Burns Club Singers who lead the company in the singing of the National Anthems, "O Canada" and "Scots Wha Hae".

This year we had the pleasure of hosting Ms Jane Brown Past President of the RWFF as our guest speaker.

The Master of Ceremonies was the Club's 1st V.P., Jim Hutchens who kept the evening moving on time while entertaining members and their guests.

Grace was given by Paul Armstrong while the introduction of the removes (dinner courses, and unique to our Annual Dinner) were presented by John Yong (Smoked Salmon and The Haggis) and Jim Hoe-Ross (Cock-a-leekie Soup and Trifle). It must be note that the soup and trifle recipes were based on those of Jim's granny from years gone by.

We were entertained by the Calgary Burns Club Singers who performed notable Burns songs, "Killikrankie" and "I Hae a Wife o' My Ain".

The Haggis was carried by long time member Bill Spiers who was escorted by ne members Don Humphries and Brian Cumming. The pipers were Dale and Stephany West of the Calgary Police Service Pipe Band.

Paul Kane did a tremendous Address to the Haggis, and it will forever be remembered for the bloodletting by slicing of his own finger. He bravely carried on, wounded and all.

"The Loyal Toast" was offered by Vlad Dhillon.

During our main course we were pleased by the music of the ever-improving Calgary Police Service Pipe Band.

Derek Lard recited "Sic a Wife as Willie Had (Willie Wassel)" in his own indelible fashion. To conclude the informal part of the evening, the Singers sang ever so proudly "The Tartans".

Following the piping in of the Head table by Club Piper Kyle Scott, the formal part of the evening commenced with the singing of “The Star o’ Rabbie Burns” followed by the introduction of the head table, CBC President Trekker Armstrong, Jane Brown (guest speaker), Henry Cairney (Toast tae the Lassies), Joe Dundas, Cam Macdonnell (Edmonton Burns Club President) Bill Cocks (Medicine Hat Burns Club President), Colin Harris (RBANA President) and Brian Cumming our newest member.



Jim Hutchens then handed over the MC duties to President Trekker Armstrong.

Jane presented an unforgettable Immortal Memory, the first by a female presenter in the history of our Club. Jane said she was attending “Not as a woman but as a true Burnsian”. Her poise and delivery were of the highest standards, and we as a Club were so pleased she could make room in her very busy schedule to accommodate us.



Her presentation was humorous and entertaining while simultaneously poignant. When she reverted to the life of Robert Burns, she transformed herself into the character of Jean Armour, and gave us an insight to what life may have been like as the wife of the Poet, expressing Jean’s thoughts on Robert’s accomplishments and failures, his highs and his lows, his love of family, his dalliances and his loyalty to those he cherished and how Jean herself coped with being married to a very complex individual.



Jim Osborne wooed Jane with a passionate recital of “Parnassus Hill”.

Henry Cairney gave us an entertainingly humorous “Toast tae the Lassies” which was replied to by Jane, a first ever reply at our event.

Joe Dundas proposed “The Toast to Absent Friends”.

The evening concluded with President Trekker Armstrong giving his closing remarks and by the singing of “Auld Lang Syne”.

What a great night. Already looking forward to January 25, 2019.

I cannot close without thanking our many Club volunteers, speakers, Jane Brown for such a professional Immortal Memory and our sponsors; Gerry Wood and Woodridge Ford Lincoln, Bill MacLachlan, Henry Cairney and Jim Osborne and the Scottish Shoppe who all contributed to a most successful and enjoyable evening.

Also, thanks go to Dark Matter (Sound), Evolution (Video) and CTCC (event Host).