



The Tattler



Spring 2023 Edition

Jane Brown Honoured by RBANA

Officers & Directors:

President	Paul Kennedy
Vice President	Mark Ferguson
Secretary/Treasurer	Jamie Osborne
Past President	Henry Cairney
Canadian Directors:	Ken Montgomery Brian Cumming Charles H Cameron
US Directors:	George McClellan Bill Fulton Phyl Smith
Hon. Presidents:	May Crawley Jim Cunningham Ron Ballantyne Chrys Ballantyne

Contacts:
RBANA
610-54th Avenue SW
Calgary AB
T2V 0C8

Editor
Colin Harris
amansaman@hotmail.ca

Webmaster
Jamie Osborne
contact@rbana.com



The Robert Burns Association
of North America

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

On Saturday, 6 May 2023, at the RBANA AGM held in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, noted to be the same day King Charles III was crowned in London, Jane Brown, RBWF Past President, RBWF Honorary President and Club Patron for the Medicine Hat Burns Club was officially made a RBANA Honorary Member after the unanimous consent of the RBANA Executive and all attending the AGM.

Jane was recognized for her many years efforts with assisting and promoting RBANA in all her travels, and for also being a regular attendee and entertainer at many or most of the RBANA AGMs that have occurred since she was RBWF president back in 2013-2014.

This award was established to recognize and honour certain individuals, like Jane, as it was accepted that certain individuals who go out of their way to support RBANA, or any Burns organization should be recognized, if for nothing else, to inspire others to be more involved, and/or as a matter of courtesy. It is also noted that RBANA is also able to create Honorary Presidents but its Constitution & Bylaws direct the Past Presidents must be residents of North America, and Honorary Members are those that reside outside North America.

As RBANA's first Honorary Member, since this by-law change, we here feel Jane was a most excellent choice.



Submitted by,
Ken Montgomery
RBANA Awards Chair,
RBANA Past President

In This Issue:

Jane Brown Made Honorary Member	1
President's Message	2
RBANA Meets in Calgary	4
Robert Burns & Taxes	7
The Winnipeg Report	9
Ellisland Update	10

President's Message

Greetings once again fellow members and guests,

I am happy to report on recent events attended by myself and other members of both RBANA and the South Jersey Celtic Society (SJCS), particularly the hosting of RBWF President, Alan Beck

The SJCS recently welcomed Alan, his wife Polly, and Grace and Elliot McKelvie to beautiful Mount Holly, New Jersey.

Alan was in town for the 25th Annual Tartan Day Parade held on April 15th, 2023 in New York City. During his trip, he, his wife Polly, and Grace & Elliot McKelvie spent three days in Mount Holly hosted by RBANA President Paul Kennedy, SJCS President John Adams and several members of the RBANA and SJCS.

Monday evening

Alan and his guests were treated to an evening of great Italian food and opera at the world-famous Victor Café where all the wait staff are trained opera singers. The highlight of the evening was when Polly Beck treated the entire restaurant to a beautiful aria from Handel's opera *Xerxes* to which she received enthusiastic applause from the restaurant patrons and staff.

Tuesday, Paul Kennedy provided a walk-

ing tour of Mount Holly and the surrounding area of Smithville Park.

While in town the local Ice Cream Parlor opened its doors early to the guests and treated all to home-made ice cream of their choice. In return, the proprietor was treated to a beautiful Mozart duet by Alan and Polly. That evening, SJCS hosted a reception and ceilidh at our local Whisky Lounge. Lots of food, drink, dancing, and music provided by SJCS's own musicians as well as songs sung by Alan, Polly, Grace and Elliot. Eventually, the fun spilled out onto High Street for more music and whisky (and a few cigars) much to the delight of passers-by.

Wednesday, Paul Kennedy and Leo Duggan (Vice President SJCS) arranged for a personal tour of the Rosenbach Museum, known for housing the largest collection of original Burns Manuscripts outside of Scotland. (right) Their guide was Alexander Ames, PhD who provided an overview

of the history of the museum, and a catalog of its holdings. Dr. Ames then produced several original *Burns'* manuscripts including *Tam O'Shanter* with the original wording. Following the Rosenbach Tour, Alan and guests made their way

to NYC for additional Tartan Week activities.

The SJCS was to meet up again with Alan and guests on Saturday in New York City to march in the 25th NYC Tartan Day Pa-



President's Message (continued)

rade. The SJCS Pipe Band (*aka Liá Fail Pipes and Drums*) gave a brief concert at Bryant Park where Alan and Polly once again delighted the audience with two Scottish duets before stepping off for the Parade at 2 pm. SJCS looks forward to making this an annual tradition and looks forward to hosting next year's RBWF president.

Thank you,

Paul Kennedy
President, Robert Burns Association of North America



RBWF President Alan Beck and RBANA President Paul Kennedy on 6th Avenue (Avenue of the Americas) outside the famed Radio City Music Hall



Addendum:

We learned following the filing of this report of the death, in Alva, Clackmannanshire, of Tina Harrower, mother of Major Andy Harrower, a former President of the Medicine Hat Burns Club and former Canadian Director of RBANA. Condolences have been conveyed on behalf of the Association and its members to Andy.

Think Burns

RBANA Meets in Calgary Alberta

The Calgary Burns Club hosted the 43rd RBANA AGM which kicked off Thursday night for early arrivals with a Pub Night and welcome gathering.

Friday saw registration and a Ceilidh with entertainment from many of the guests including the CBC Singers, and a surprise visit from overseas visitors Fran, Anna, and Aggie; (aka Jane Brown, Jean Abdulrahim, and Margaretann Dougall) (left) much

to the delight of the guests. CBC Piper Kyle Scott was on hand to kick off the evening and to accompany the Highland Dancers from the Campbell School of Highland Dance. (below) Additional Pipers from Medicine



Hat Burns Club, Rob Cowan and Malcom Sissons

rounded out the Pipe interludes. Participants from among the guests, including Scott Montgomery, Maurice McAtamney, Bill Cocks, Les Strachan, Jan Boydol, John and Barb Robertson, Malcom Sissons, Rob Cowan, Dave Millburn, Ron Pratt, Gordon Grant-McCulloch, Sandy Paterson, Paul Kennedy, Jim Hutchins, kept the crowd thoroughly en-

tertained throughout the evening.

Grace was prayerfully provided by Brian Cumming.



Jan Boydol & Barb Robertson



The RBANA AGM held its annual

meeting where it presented Jane Brown with an Honorary Lifetime Membership. (As reported on Page one)

Saturday saw the Burns Quiz with Les Strachan of Virginia and the Halton Peel Burns Club not surprisingly taking home the top prize. RBANA VP Mark Ferguson read the winning entry from the Jack



Left to right: Malcom Sissons, Rob Cowan & Kyle Scott



Scott Montgomery Edmonton Burns Club



Hume Poetry Contest, a poem by Jim Alexander of the Atlanta Burns Club to a great and enthusiastic round of applause. You will be able to read Jim's winning Entry, "Epistle to My Grandson," and the

RBANA Meets in Calgary Alberta continued

other entries in RBANA's "Tattler - Supplement" which accompanies this newsletter. The event culminated with the Burns Supper held on Saturday evening. Following the National Anthems of Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom, led by the CBC Singers, the Haggis was piped 'round the room by Piper, Kyle Scott with additional members of the parade consisting of Sword



Bearers, John Adams (SJCS) and Mathew Hill (MHBC), Haggis Bearer, Margaretann Dougal (RBWF), and Whisky Bearer, Ken Montgomery (MFBC). Les Strachan (HPBC) then provided a magnificent rendering of "Address to a Haggis" much to the delight of all in attendance. Ms Phyl Smith (RBANA US Director, Sarasota Burns Club) (left) gave an incredible Immortal Memory during which time, the



guests were spellbound, as they intently hung on every word. The spell was finally broken as her audience broke out in an enthusiastic applause. Toasts to the Lasses and the Reply

were provided by Mark Ferguson (RBANA VP, BCA), (right) and Jean Abdulrahim, (Past President of the Mother Club in Greenock) (right), respectively; both kept the guests thoroughly entertained. Following more entertainment, the evening ended with the traditional *Auld Lang Syne* led again by the CBC Singers thus bringing to a close a most successful Conference.



The 2023 RBANA Conference and AGM was a great success and all in attendance had a fantastic time. I want to thank everybody who donated items to our Silent Auction and Bucket Draw. With these items as well as the 50/50 raffle we had, and the support of all in attendance for the Conference, the Ceilidh, the Dinner, or all of the above, I can say that the 2023 Conference and AGM saw a very healthy surplus, and one of the most successful events we have ever had. Thank you to our Organizing Committee: Brian Cumming, Jamie Osborne, and Henry Cairney (CBC), Ken Montgomery (MHBC), as well as to Don Humphreys, Club Steward (CBC); our Board of Directors, our Membership and our Guests for making this happen.

Submitted by:
Paul Kennedy
with contributions from
Brian Cumming and Jamie Osborne
(Photos courtesy Charlie Malone)



Scenes from the Weekend



Les Strachan accepts the Connor Quiz Trophy from Paul Kennedy



Mark Ferguson accepts the Hume Trophy from Paul Kennedy on behalf of Jim Alexander





Robert Burns and Taxes (with a short note on the Kirk)

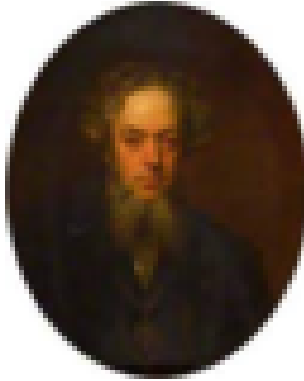
After moving to Mossgiel a lot happened to Robert Burns. Great

Britain, then as now, was experiencing a staggering national debt and desperately needed funds. Soon after their arrival at the farm they rented from Gavin Hamilton (right), Burns received a packet of tax forms from his old friend Aiken, the government tax collector in Ayr, that required him (Burns) to list all his assets. This tawdry business of taxing folks on their possessions was introduced by William the Conqueror and exists today as a genealogy record of sorts in the Domesday book. In Burns' day this was the period in Britain's history when the Prime Minister, William Pitt over spent the public's money on his failed overseas adventures, i.e.: war in the American Colony's.

In any event Burns, always the cynic and never afraid to sarcastically rain ridicule down upon the heads of anyone he thought deserved it, seriously considered the tax documents that lay before him. Taxable assets, it would seem, included farm equipment, hired hands, beasts and wheeled conveyances. In true Burns fashion he composed his inventory in mocking prose, more I believe, as a measure to amuse Aiken than as a cynic. Burns wrote: *"Heaven had sent him one more than he wanted, sonsie, smirking dear-bought Bess. (his daughter by Lizzie Paton). He "refused to pay a tax on either her or her mother". He had, he said, "paid enough for them already", but, he promised to do good and be better:*

Frae this time forth, I do declare
I'll ne'er ride horse nor hussy more; (Lizzie)

Thro' dirt and dub for life I'll paddle
Ere I so dear pay for a saddle...
The Kirk an 'you can tak' you that!
It puts but little in your pat!



Beasts included "carriage" horses. Burns claimed he had no carriage horses but he did have *"four plough horses of gallant mettle"* including one he called *"a good old has-been that had been strong and willing in its day"*. Another was a *"well-going filly that had often brought him safely home from Kilmarnock after a carousal at the Inn"*. Another one of his horses Burns described as *"As worthy a beast that every rode hide or rope"*; and his fourth horse was *"a stubborn, capricious, stark mad beast that had been named Highland Donald for its sins"*. Burns admitted to also owning a promising young colt, *"the best that ever run before a tail"* which could bring £15 if it lived to maturity.

Burns owned no carriage but he admitted to owning three carts and two wheelbarrows one of which had a broken handle and a spindle knocked out of the wheel rendering it more suitable for the firewood his mother made use of it for.

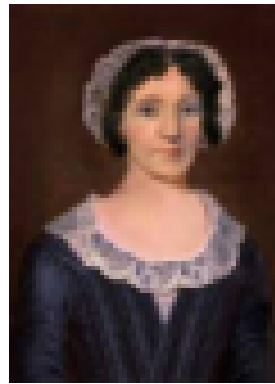
Farm hands were another challenge. Burns claimed he had three young hired lads one of which walked before the plow removing larger rocks lest they damage the shears and another who assisted with the threshing. The third, he wrote, was a very wee lad who helped with the feeding of the beasts. The farm lads, according to Burns' description, were "notable for their noisy behavior and exceeding healthy appetites."

It is interesting to note too, that one of Burns' duties was to daily examine the three lads as to their proficiency in the Kirk's Catechism

Robert Burns and Taxes (continued)

requirement. As much as he ridiculed the Kirk and its formalities, he still complied with the requirements they levied upon everyone. He had no female servants: "*Lord keep me free o' a' temptation!*" a sly reference no doubt to his relationship with Lizzie, but neither did he have a wife... "*an that my bliss is, an ye hae laid no tax on misses!*" His inventory to the excise was dated February 22, 1784. By the following year, 1785, Burns' passion for Jean Armour had ignited his fertile brain and he produced such masterpieces as: Rantin, Rovin' Robin, The Jolly Beggars, The Cotter's Saturday Night, and The Twa Dogs, among others. He churned out numerous Epistles and Epigrams, all of them great hits with the tavern crowd. One wonders if Burns ever bought a drink himself. In contrast to his examining the farm lads on their Catechism, his epic poem The Holy Fair, quite the reverse, was derisive to the Kirks annual Communion services that gave

Burns a lot of material by which he unleashed his contempt for the sacrosanct and holy observances of the faithful to the annoyance of the Kirk Elders's. Jean's parents, faithful pillars of the church, were likewise unamused. And, we do not forget Holy Willie's Prayer which brought down the house in every tavern it was recited in. The Kirks negative reaction is not specifically noted but what Burns allowed them by his indiscrete manner made up for their humiliation.



Well, I've drifted away from Burns' tax problems, a phenomena we all experience in different degrees. I suppose the old axiom is probably still true: "The more things change, the more they stay the same." It is ironic that Burns would in a few years, actually seek employment as a collector of the excise and succeed in obtaining it. His motives of course were to enjoy a farm free guaranteed annual income for his family's survival.

Submitted by George McLellan

The Tattler encourages all clubs to submit news of club events or activities. As well, all members are reminded they are welcome to submit articles or essays on Burns or Burns related topics for publication.

The deadline for submissions for the Summer Edition is Tuesday August 15. The edition will be published and distributed August 31.

The Winnipeg Report

Club Member Turns 100

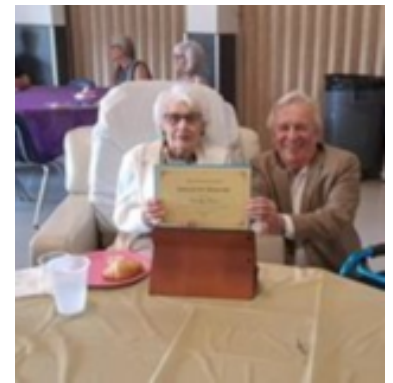


Members of the Winnipeg Robert Burns Club, and other members of the Winnipeg community gathered at a community centre in South Winnipeg to celebrate the birthday of the club's oldest member.

Dorothy Doran, a club director, turned 100 years old on June 1.

(Right) Longest serving member Jean Lindsay HLM, President Charles Cameron and his wife, Darlene Club Treasurer with the birthday girl

Knowing of Dorothy's interest in Winnipeg native William Stephenson, (aka Winston Churchill's "Man Intrepid") the inspiration for James Bond, Club President, and RBANA Canadian Director, Charles Cameron arranged, with Dwight MacAulay, (a Vice President of the St Andrew's Society) President of The Intrepid Society to honour Dorothy with an Honorary Life Member. (below right)



St Andrews Society Hold Picnic



On Sunday, June 4, the St Andrew's Society of Winnipeg held its annual Picnic, teaming up with the Prairie Pipe Band Association of Manitoba, who held their PPBAM Jam piping competition. Friends from the Lads and Lassies Scottish Country Dance group also

joined in and performed, and had SASOW members dancing as well.



'Overwhelming public support' for plans to save Robert Burns' farm

Ambitious plans to safeguard the only farm built by Robert Burns have received overwhelming public support.

A digital engagement exercise found almost 90% backing for proposals to preserve and improve Ellisland Farm beside the River Nith where Burns wrote Auld Lang Syne and Tam o' Shanter.

Robert Burns Ellisland Trust, the charity behind the Ellisland FutureVision, want new generations of artists and musicians to work in

the landscape that inspired the national bard, and also to create holiday accommodation and event hire to make the site sustainable.

The 1788 cottage would be brought back to its original state, with other historic buildings converted to host educational and community activity. Biodiversity would be enhanced by woodland management and native cultivation.

The digital engagement exercise found 96% agreed that conservation and education work should be subsidised by activities such as tourism and events, an approach known as "conservation through use."

More than 92% agreed the cottage built by Burns for his young wife Jean Armour, which currently houses the museum and staff accommodation, should be returned to its original state to create an "immersive" experience for visitors.

Almost 96% agreed that the barns and byres, which are well preserved but in need of urgent repair, should be restored to host workshops and events to celebrate the spirit of Burns in music, writing and culture.

More than 86% agreed with the trust's proposals to create a newly built visitor centre to house the important collection comprising the poet's personal possessions and

manuscripts. The visitor centre will also include a cafe and outside play space. The FutureVision aims to boost the Dumfries and Galloway economy with a heritage attraction of national and international significance.

The proposals include artistic retreats in "tiny house" accommodation inspired by the hermitage, the bothy in neighbouring Friars Carse estate where Burns would retreat to write. The new hermitages would be in converted historic outbuildings as well as off grid.

Joan McAlpine, Project Director at the Robert Burns Ellisland Trust, said the overwhelming support demonstrated the value people placed on Burns and his legacy.

"We are very grateful to everyone who responded to the digital survey and who visited us on site for the engagement day too. It is very clear that people understand the power of the

poet in generating economic benefits for Scotland generally and Dumfries and Galloway in this instance.

"The public agree with us that this precious heritage should be preserved but also help new generations be inspired and improve the wellbeing of local people, especially young people. We already maintain access to the riverside walks created by Burns, which is a valuable public amenity. But this site is at risk and only an ambitious plan such as our FutureVision can secure it, by making it financially and environmentally sustainable.

"Since the new trust took over in 2020, we have reached out to the community with our open days,

cultural events and school visits programme. But to build on that, we need significant investment to create a world class heritage attraction which will attract people to the area from around the globe."

The trust will now begin fundraising to take the plans



'Overwhelming public support' for plans to save Robert Burns' farm continued

to the next level, including an application to the National Lottery Heritage fund.

The digital engagement exercise was conducted by Dumfries based independent consultancy, Indigo Words, and funded by a Community Led Vision Challenge Fund grant from Dumfries and Galloway Council.

Last year, a report by historic buildings experts Adams Napier funded by Historic Environment Scotland found the site to be of exceptional cultural significance and the best preserved of all Burns' homes. But a condition survey in the same report warned the historic buildings were at risk and required extensive repairs.

The FutureVision plans were drawn up for the trust by Delfinity Ltd consultants and OCA architects. The FutureVision Project was funded by South of Scotland Enterprise, The Holyrood Trust and the Architectural Heritage Fund.



Render of a view of courtyard from cafe at Burns' Ellisland Farm.

