

The Robert Burns Scottish Club of Erie, PA

Once again, a group of over 120 attended the Annual Burns Supper, on Saturday, January 30, 2016, at the Sheraton Hotel in Erie, Pennsylvania. This was a new venue for us this year, and we were very pleased with it. The room



we were in had banks of windows on three sides, looking out on to a marina and the Bay front of the city. The twinkling lights outside added to the sparkle of the evening!

Bill McLellan was our Master of Ceremonies for the evening at 6 feet 6 inches a very commanding figure! After the National Anthem and “Scot’s Wha Hae” were sung, led by Gail Detar, the parading of the haggis took place. Tom Kalinowski (a guid Scottish name!), of the local Erepa Grottos Pipes and Drums, led the parade, playing his pipes, with Ken Elder (of Canada) proudly carrying the haggis. Following closely behind were Christopher McLellan, and Jason Lawrie with the tatties and neeps!

Everyone enjoyed Dr. Tim Thompson’s rendition of “To a Haggis”, which he has delivered at each supper for several years. Each year, he seems to add another little nuance here and there. Were he present, Burns would have been very proud of him! Tim is a board member of the club, and a Professor of Communications at nearby Edinboro State University of Pennsylvania.

A meal followed with the obligatory Scotch Broth, and Scottish Trifle book-ending the delicious entrees. Choices were Prime Rib, French Breast of Chicken, Faroe Island Roasted Salmon, and Vegetable Wellington. As always Gerry Urbaniak’s haggis (made right here in Erie) was very well received by all who chose to try it!

It was with great delight that we welcomed back the Reverend Shawn Clerkin to deliver the Immortal Memory. He had been our guest speaker three years prior. Shawn is an Episcopal priest, and also the Director of Theatre at Gannon University, in Erie. He gave a heart-warming tribute to the Bard, peppered with humor, much to everyone’s delight.

Next, a 26-year member of the board, Teresa MacDonald, was honored for all that she has contributed to the club. She and her husband, David, will be moving to Arizona in a few months. The gifts, of a bottle of Robert Burns Scotch Whisky, and a quaiiche, with the words of the chorus of “Auld Lang Syne” etched on the inside, were given with appreciation.

The last of the ceremonies was the Toast to the Lassies, very well presented by board member, Duncan Lawrie (a native of Scotland); and the Reply to the Laddies was also given very well, with just enough “sassiness”, by Duncan’s wife, Minnie (a native of the Philippines!).

The remainder of the evening was dedicated to Scottish Country Dancing. So many of the guests take part each year in this almost aerobic exercise! And 2016 was no exception! “Gay Gordons”, “Dashing White Sergeant”, “Strip the Willow”, and another six dances kept all those participating “on their toes”. Derek Sweet, who stepped in, for his first time, as sound technician, kept the music flowing. The final Farewell (“May the best ye’ve ever seen, be the worst ye’ll ever see...”) was given by Sheila Campbell Sweet, and then all present made a huge circle around the room, joined hands and sang the traditional “Auld Lang Syne”.



Sheila Campbell Sweet, Secretary of the Robert Burns Scottish Club of Erie, PA