

# The Tattler

Autumn 2016 Edition

## Words from the President

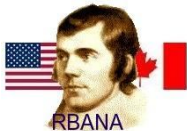
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The Robert Burns Association  
of North America

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

As I write this, I am aboard a train taking me back to Edinburgh, and from there back to Glasgow to fly home after another enjoyable Burns Federation conference in Peebles, about which more inside.

The significance of this particular journey is the day itself. As we were reminded at the worship service this morning, it is the fifteenth anniversary of my generation's most horrible, memorable day. I and every one of my generation can tell you exactly where they were on that day, and at that time. (For me it was inside Southwark Cathedral, south of the Thames, in London, on my very first trip abroad).

Two simply numbers, when married together with a slash between – 9/11 – which needs no further explanation.

The Day That Changed the World.

If asked for a Burns quote relevant to the day, (and oh how many occasions for which there is one, even if he is long departed) most would, naturally turn to "Man was made to mourn."

I however will choose a more optimistic course and choose one that is well known to every lover of Burns. It is the last verse of a song that has become an anthem for humanity and worldwide peace.

*Then let us pray that come what may  
(And come it will for a' that)  
That Sense and Worth o'er all the earth  
Shall bear the gree an' a' that!  
For a' that and a' that,  
It's comin' yet for a' that,  
That man to man the world o'er  
Will brithers be for a' that.*

To which I can only add – Amen.

Yours Aye  
Colin Harris  
President



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# Medicine Hat Prepares to Welcome RBANA

**T**ake a moment to put the weekend of April 28–30, 2017 on your calendar.

The Medicine Hat Burns Clubs is proud and very pleased to be hosting the 2017 RBANA AGM on



that weekend. Anyone who has previously attended a Jolly Beggars Banquet or annual Burns dinner celebration here in Medicine Hat can confirm that the Medicine Hat gang puts on a first class show. [To which the Editor can attest] We intend to do so again. Also, where we promise to host a very special event we

also note that with the exchange rate of the US/Canada dollar this is a very economical getaway for our US members.

The name "Medicine Hat" is the English translation of Saamis (SA-MUS) – the Blackfoot word for the eagle tail feather headdress worn by medicine men – or "Medicine Hat." Several legends are associated with the name from a mythical mer-man river serpent named Soy-yee-daa-bee – the Creator – who appeared to a hunter and instructed him to sacrifice his wife to get mystical powers which were manifest in a special hat. Another legend tells of a battle long ago between the Blackfoot and the Cree in which a retreating Cree "Medicine Man" lost his headdress in the South Saskatchewan River.

A number of factors have always made Medicine Hat a natural gathering place. Before Europeans arrived, the Blackfoot, Cree and Assiniboiné nations used the area for hundreds of years. The gently sloping valley with its converging waterways and hardy native cottonwood trees attracted both humans and the migratory bison herds which passed through the area.

In 1883, the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) stopped to build a bridge across the South Saskatche-

wan River and a tent town was born. With the arrival of the railroad came the Northwest Mounted Police. They maintained law and order among the railway workers and First Nation's people of the area and made Medicine Hat a law-abiding town.

In the CPR's search for water, their drills accidentally struck gas west of the town, heralding the exploration that mapped out one of the largest gas fields in North America, and Medicine Hat later being immortalized by Rudyard Kipling as having "all hell for a basement".

Because of these reserves the city is also known as "The Gas City".

Medicine Hat is a city of 63,000 plus people located in southeast Alberta, Canada. It is approximately 295 kilometers (183 miles) southeast of Calgary and 149 kilometers (93 miles) from the nearest US border crossing at Sweet Grass, Montana.

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. Reservations can be made by going to [guest-services@clarionmh.ca](mailto:guest-services@clarionmh.ca) or calling 1.403.527-8844 and referring to RBANA 2017.



Registration fees are expected to be around \$150.00 per person. This includes tickets for the Friday night Meet n' Greet & Ceilidh and the 2017 RBANA AGM Banquet. We look forward to seeing you there.

# New Recording of Burns Music May Not Be To Everyone's Liking

The songs of Robert Burns have been stripped back to how they originally sounded by academics at Glasgow University.

Burns' songs are normally associated with a fiddle, guitar, and accordion.

But they have now been recorded "how they were intended by Burns himself", with harpsichords, cellos and violas.

Prof Kirsteen McCue (right), from the university's centre for Burns studies, said the recordings "would not be to everyone's taste."

She added: "We have not recorded them so people will like them, we have recorded them because that is what they are."

According to the university, the Scottish poet's songs, written in the late 18th and early 19th century, were "tailored for the parlours of the middle classes", and would have been performed in that setting on Baroque harpsichords, cellos and violas, rather than their more usual airing today; in a pub, accompanied by a violin or guitar.

As part of a five-year research project called Editing Robert Burns for the 21st Century, and exploring where they came from, the university's Centre for Robert Burns Studies gave a group of 11 musicians and singers copies of the original publications, dating between 1787 and the 1930s, and asked them to perform what they could read.

The result was 25 recordings using the two original publications as performance texts.

Through a series of workshops the musicians learned what an 18th-century singing lesson would have been like and how 18th-century dress might have affected their breathing or playing. They worked on the songs with professional coaching, using instruments of the time: gut-stringed violins and cellos, harpsichord and an early version of the piano called the fortepiano. To add a sense of period environment, they recorded the performances at Glasgow's Pollok House – not a venue that Burns visited himself, but one built during his lifetime.

Everyone, according to McCue, found it challenging

to perform the songs with their original instrumental accompaniments and sometimes they needed to amend things that didn't work comfortably. Several performers struggled with the keys of the songs – often the singer was having to sing in too high a key or where the melodies ranged between very high and low notes. This was common for fiddle tunes, which were often the melodic basis of Burns' songs.

What was really noticeable was how difficult some of the Thomson accompaniments were. They demanded that players could read music fluently and play to a high level of skill. This would have been a problem for many amateur players in Burns' day, since these publications were intended to encourage people to play the songs at home.

"People don't really know what Burns's songs sounded like, because the songs have been taken out of context and have become what they are today which is a bit of everything. So it's all about the context of the time," added McCue.

McCue, who led the research, said the team wanted to use replicas of instruments from the period. "So it does sound very different and that is something which can be unattractive for the vast majority of Burns lovers who just want the melody. They just want a singer with a fiddle and the songs work beautifully that way ... but that's not how they originally appeared," she said.

The recordings come at the close of a five-year project for the Centre for Robert Burns Studies, funded by an Arts and Humanities Research Council grant, to release a multi-volume edition of Burns's work "We've always intended with the songs of this edition to foreground performance as well as print," said Gerard Carruthers, the Centre's director. "The new recordings are intended to be enjoyed and also to make people think about Burns's music in its own day as well as its legacy. Burns was always open at the same time to tradition and innovation."

The recordings can be heard on line at:  
<http://burnsc21.glasgow.ac.uk/performing-burnssongs-in-his-own-day/>





# Medicine Hat Club Host Jolly Beggars Banquet & Jean Armour Ladies Dinner

**Submitted by Ken Montgomery, RBANA VP & Secretary, Medicine Hat Burns Club**

**O**n Saturday, 24 September 2016 the Medicine Hat Burns Club hosted its 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Jolly Beggars Banquet. For those who don't know, this event was created as a special event for the Club. This black tie function was created and especially limited to 37 men, as Burns was 37 when he died. Those attending would be known as Cronies.

For this event the Club now uses a special custom made table specially made for the Club by the craftsmen at the workshop attached to the British Army Training Unit Suffield (BATUS), which is included as part of the nearby Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Suffield. It is this British army base that does all of the British tank training for engagements in Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan or elsewhere.

The Friday night before the big event, the Club hosted a special Ceilidh for the special guests and local



L to R Ken Montgomery, RBANA VP and Secretary, Medicine Hat Burns Club, Medicine Hat Mayor Ted Clugston, RBANA President Colin Harris, Craig Elder, Outgoing President, Medicine Hat Burns Club, Bill Cocks, incoming President and RBWF President Bobby Kane.

volunteers in the Montgomery Pub that featured a warm fireplace, pipes, singing, great Scotch, ad hoc entertainment and custom made haggis pizza. A grand time was had by all who attended.

This year's Jolly Beggar's event would also be a special for many reasons. First, the Club had Bobby Kane, the newly installed president of the Robert Burns World Federation (RBWF) attending as the Club's honoured guest. Bobby also presented the Immortal Memory. Second, the Club also had Colin Harris, the RBANA president attending as well as three past presidents of the Calgary Burns Club



Group photo of the 2016 Cronies with Poosie Nancie and the Scotch bar Lassies in front of Medicine Hat's historic Cypress Club.

(CBC), Ian Denness, representing Henry Cairney, CBC president, who was away in Scotland, Dr. Paul Armstrong and Tony Grace, who is also one of our RBANA Canadian directors. Here we note that we also had the Medicine Hat Club's Vice President elect, Andy Harrower attend from Yellowknife, North West Territories (NWT). Andy is also another RBANA Canadian director.

Of special note is that A. Craig Elder, president of the Medicine Hat Burns Club finished his term of office and at this event passed the torch on to president elect Bill Cocks.

Those attending the 2016 Jolly Beggars also included His Worship, Ted Clugston, Mayor of the City of Medicine Hat, a poet in his own right who did 'A Mans a Man' at the dinner; the Hon. Bob Wanner, Member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta (MLA) for Medicine Hat and Speaker of the Alberta Legislature, who did the Selkirk Grace, and Scott Montgomery,

president of the Edmonton Burns Club who sang a song he specially wrote for the event entitled 'Ode to the Jolly Beggars'.

One special treat for the Jolly Beggars this year was



The cronies await their feast which included cock o' leaky soup, stacked haggis and rack o' lamb.

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## Medicine Hat continued.

the re-institution of the Club's Order of the Monkey. This was done as 2016 is the Chinese year of the monkey and there was a demand to bring this unique presentation back that was first initiated in 2014 when RBWF president Jane Brown was here as the Club's honoured guest. So, if anyone asks, 'Are you a monkey?' you will know what they mean. This honour will now be continued each year.

### The 2016 Jean Armour Ladies Dinner

On Saturday, 1 October 2016 the Medicine Hat Burns Club hosted its second annual Jean Armour ladies Dinner. This function is also restricted to 37 but was designed for 37 ladies. In fact, other than staff the only men present are the male volunteers



Ken Montgomery, RBANA VP, Lt. Col. Eleanor Haevens CD and Master Warrant Officer Di-anne Doyle MMM, CD, Jean Armour Co-Chair sharing a laugh and a glass of wine.

from the Club who act as waiters. The ladies also use the Club's special BATUS table. For the inaugural event last year the Club's special guest speaker was Alberta Provincial Court Judge Sylvia

Oishi. This year the Club was pleased to have Lt. Colonel Eleanor Haevens CD, who is the current commanding officer of Technical Services, 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Division support Group based out of Edmonton attend. Like Judge Oishi the colonel was a hit! All reports back was that the ladies attending had a fantastic time, and like the Jolly Beggars the problem now is that we have way more interested persons wanting to attend than we have seats. In conclusion, the bottom line is that there are many Scottish and Burns related events that take place each year, or could occur if any Club wants to take on the initiative, and if you want to take in Scottish cultural events or better know Burns and appreciate the fellowship and education that is internationally offered, all you have to do is take the initiative or pick up a phone or send an email to participate or otherwise be involved.



The lassies start digging in to their Cornish game hens.



President Colin Harris chats with RBWF President Bobby Kane and Ian Denness, Past President of the Calgary Burns Club during cocktail hour.



Bobby Kane and fellow cronies applauding some of the outstanding entertainment provided.



## Borders Host Ramsay Festival

Without Allan Ramsay, there would be no Robert Burns. So says noted Glasgow University academic Gerard Carruthers ahead of the first festival to celebrate the life and works of an 18th century “unsung” Scottish poet Allan Ramsay. Professor Carruthers, co-director of the Centre for Robert Burns Studies at the University of Glasgow will be a guest at the festival.

Carruthers said Ramsay was a hugely influential figure.

“He was the first 18th century Scots poet and the father of Scots poetry, whose creativity heavily influenced art, music and theatre at that time. Allan Ramsay’s genius really cannot be understated.

“Without doubt Allan Ramsay is an unsung hero of Scottish poetry,” he said.

“He doesn’t get sufficient praise or recognition for what he achieved during his lifetime, but the impact he had on others around him at the time was monumental, and that is what this festival is all about.

“It is fair to say without Ramsay there would be no Robert Burns.”

The poet’s son, also Allan, was one of Scotland’s greatest portrait painters and also celebrated in the festival at the Allan Ramsay Hotel in Carlops in the Scottish Borders south of Edinburgh.

Among the contributors attending the festival was Professor Murray Pittock, Pro-Vice Principal, University of Glasgow and general editor of the Edinburgh works of Allan Ramsay from Edinburgh University Press. Professor Pittock said: “Allan Ramsay was not only a pioneer of the Romantic movement and a collector and editor of Scots songs; he was also a cultural innovator of the Enlightenment.

“He founded the first subscription library in the British Isles, the first established theatre in Scotland, where he seems to have pioneered early bird and season ticket options, and co-founded St Luke’s Academy, Scotland’s first professional training school for artists.

“In his poetry he developed modern literary Scots. Ramsay invented the term ‘Doric’ to describe

Scots and was a huge influence on Robert Burns and all those who came after.”

The inaugural Allan Ramsay Festival, which coincides with Ramsay’s birthday, was hosted by Rosemary Brown and Kenny Hall, licensees of the Allan Ramsay Hotel. The coaching inn was built in 1792 in recognition of Allan Ramsay, more than 30 years after his death.

Ramsay (1684-1758) was a regular visitor to the area, which became an affectionate inspiration for some of his work.

During the festival local MSP Christine Grahame unveiled an Historic Environment Scotland plaque on the Allan Ramsay Hotel, commemorating Ramsay’s status as a founder of Romanticism and modern Scottish poetry.

There will be a permanent Allan Ramsay resource at the pub including copies of key works by Ramsay senior; a specially commissioned reproduction of an historic portrait depiction of Allan Ramsay as The Gentle Shepherd and guided walks around Carlops.



### Who was Allan Ramsay?

Allan Ramsay was born on 15 October 1686 at Leadhills in South Lanarkshire.

He wrote poetry in Scots and also worked to preserve the works of earlier Scottish poets. He was admired by Robert Burns as a pioneer in the use of Scots in contemporary poetry.

Ramsay settled in Edinburgh about 1700 and in 1701 became an apprentice wigmaker. He married in 1712 and established a reputation as a prolific composer of verse in both English and Scots.

In 1721 Ramsay published a subscriber's edition of his own poems and changed from wigmaker to bookseller, his shop becoming a meeting place for both locals and visitors.

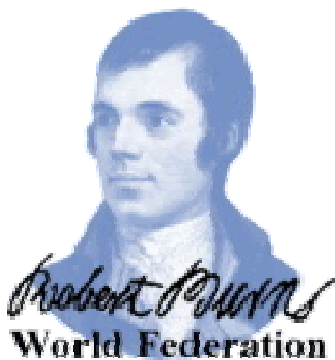
He founded Britain's first circulating library in 1726, the Academy of St Luke for instruction in painting and drawing in 1729 and a theatre in 1736.

He retired in 1740 and died on 7 January 1758 in Edinburgh.

**Source: *Encyclopaedia Britannica***

## Federation Meets in Peebles

The Robert Burns World Federation's Annual Conference was, once again, held in the Peebles Hydro Hotel over the weekend of 9-11th September 2016. Among the nearly 140 in attendance, there was a dozen North Americans present, led by RBANA President Colin Harris. In addition to the AGM, two splendid dinners, a seminar, a Friday night ceilidh anchored by Luath, a four piece band from South Ayrshire, and including entertaining submissions by a number of delegates; and an uplifting church service, the main event was



Bobby Kane with Past President Peter Hughes

the inauguration of the new President of the Federation, Bobby Kane from West Lothian. (Susan Boyle lives just around the corner) During the hand-over Bobby praised outgoing President, Dr. Peter Hughes, for his outstanding year of office during which he had travelled thousands of miles and worked tirelessly on behalf of the Federation. He had shown strong leadership and continued the work of his predecessors in streamlining the management structure and placing the Federation in a much stronger financial position.

Following election at the morning's AGM the new Junior Vice President, Bill Nolan joined President Bobby Kane and the new Senior Vice President, Ian McIntyre. There were presentations of Honorary President medals to prominent Lanarkshire businessmen, and Federation supporters, John Chapman and Boyd Tunnock, and a Life Membership to an emotional



Overseas Delegates : From the left: Jim O'Lone (Australia), Louise Pratt, Ron Pratt (Calgary) Heather O'Lone (Australia), Henry Cairney, Shona Cairney (Calgary) President Bobby Kane, Colin Harris (Winnipeg), Sheila Grace, Tony Grace (Calgary), May Crawley and Alex Crawley (St Catherines, Ontario).

Also attending, but not in the photograph, was Leslie Strachan and Bill & Mary Jim Fulton from the USA.

Joe McGinty, who led the ceilidhs for many years. As the Sunday Service at the conference was held on September 11, a minute's silence was observed in memory of all those who died or were injured in the 9/11 attack in America.

In his sermon the Rev David Ness made reference to Burns' poem Man Was Made to Mourn a sentiment which was echoed on the plaque on the plinth erected outside the Federation's headquarters in the Dower House Dean Castle Country Park, Kilmarnock.



Junior Vice President Bill Nolan, President Bobby Kane and Senior Vice President Ian McIntyre with their wives.

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## Federation Meets in Peebles continued

At the seminar on Saturday afternoon, Scots poet Rab Wilson from Sanquhar gave a fascinating talk about the background to, and outcome of, the forensic reconstruction of Burns' head undertaken by Dundee University. Rab also delivered a dramatic recitation of Burns' *Death and Doctor Hornbook* as well as regaling us with quotes from his own wonderful collection of poetry in Scots. This highly engaging session was interspersed with songs when he accompanied his wife Margaret as they entertained the company with some beautiful Burns' melodies.



Those who remained for the worship service Sunday morning, gathered afterward in memory of the lives lost on September 11, 2001

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.

