



The Tattler



Spring 2020 Edition

Officers & Directors

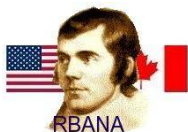
President	Ken Montgomery
Vice President	Henry Cairney
Secretary/Treasurer	Mathew Hill
Past President	Colin Harris
Canadian Directors:	Tony Grace Andy Harrower CD Jim Steel
U S Directors:	George McClellan Bill Fulton Mark Ferguson
Hon Presidents	May Crawley Jack Mann Jim Cunningham Jean Cunningham Ron Ballantyne Chrys Ballantyne

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The Robert Burns Association
of North America

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

Words from the President

We are living in unique and exceptional times. The Covid-19 pandemic is wreaking havoc all over the world, and there is no sign of it letting up soon. As a result of this global situation, RBANA's 2020 AGM has been cancelled. Your Board and I would like to thank Mark Ferguson, George McClellan and the members of the Burns Club of Atlanta for all their hard work and efforts. We also understand their frustration at having to cancel



due to circumstances beyond their control. Where serious efforts were made to re-schedule, it became clear a new date cannot be considered until circumstances significantly change, and until we, and the world really know what is going on. That may not be for a while. It is what it is, and I trust we will all meet in Atlanta in due course.

With respect to our current Directors, we learned that Tony Grace and Jimmy Steel, two of our esteemed Canadian Directors, decided to step down and would have to be replaced. I would like to personally and sincerely thank these two gentlemen for their service, wish them well and hopefully see them involved in some capacity with RBANA or RBANA events in the future.

Brian Cumming from the Calgary Burns Club and Colin Harris from the Winnipeg Burns Club have agreed to come on board as Canadian replacements. Andy Harrower has also agreed to remain as a Canadian Director. VP Henry Cairney was slated to move up as President.

In the US we have Bill Fulton, who was slated to ascend as Vice President, George McClellan (Burns Club of Atlanta) has agreed to remain as a US Director, Mark Ferguson (Burns Club of Atlanta), currently an appointed Director, has agreed to officially become a US Director, and Paul Kennedy (South Jersey Celtic Society) has agreed to fill the gap left by Bill Fulton and become our third US Director.

At this time no one has challenged these gentlemen so all could be ac-

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Montgomery's Musings Continued

claimed if a vote were held.

With the 2020 AGM cancelled this causes a major problem. However, as we are living in unique and exceptional times, I believe we must be prepared to adjust and adapt. Therefore it is the decision of the Executive that an email vote be held on Saturday, 25 April 2020, the date of the scheduled AGM, and in lieu of the AGM so we may properly proceed. I note that the pre-AGM notifications required to be distributed have already gone out.

It is suggested that if a majority of RBANA members agree to proceed in this manner, there will be three matters on the agenda.

1. To acclaim the proposed new Officers and Directors as follows:

Henry Cairney as President;
Bill Fulton as Vice President;
Ken Montgomery as Past President;
Mathew Hill as Secretary Treasurer;
Andy Harrower as Canadian Director;
Colin Harris as Canadian Director;
Brian Cumming as Canadian Director;
George McClellan as US Director;
Mark Ferguson as US Director, and
Paul Kennedy as US Director.

- 2 To accept the proposed changes to the RBANA Constitution & Bylaws as is, recognizing that same may be amended or changed at the next AGM, and last
- 3 To allow the new Board to identify the time and place of the 2021 AGM.

The Secretary will be sending out an email to each member that shall include a ballot that will include the yes or no option to proceed. Clubs or kindred Societies, who have 3 votes, will have to advise the Secretary who will be voting for their respective organizations. Individual members are reminded they have 1 vote, and all are reminded that only those

members having their dues paid in full can vote. Other details on the voting process shall also be sent to each member by the Secretary.

If the membership decides this process is not acceptable then a vote will not occur and the current Board will meet by conference call or other electronic means to discuss options as allowed by the current Constitution & Bylaws. I am of course asking that all members support the suggested email option as above.

So, where I am thankful we got through most or all of our 2020 Burns dinners, I am saddened that the 2020 AGM had to be cancelled, and to see what is happening globally. I wish everyone well and urge all to take care and take serious the precautions suggested by various governments and agencies. We will get through this.

Yours in Burns,

Ken

Kenneth H. Montgomery
President, RBANA



**KEN SELF QUARANTING WITH AN ADE-
QUATE SUPPLY OF MEDICINAL LIQUID
CHEERS - WE WILL SURVIVE!**

Atlanta Conference Cancelled Due To Covid-19 Pandemic

As indicated in the report from Ken Montgomery on page 1 of this newsletter, and to the surprise, certainly, of no one, the 2020 RBANA Conference has been cancelled, for obvious reasons.

In a statement issued by Director Mark Ferguson, one of the organizers of the planned Atlanta conference

“We would like to thank all of you who registered to attend and confirm that you may cancel your hotel room bookings at the Georgia Tech Hotel and Conference Center. You will also be receiving a refund for the conference

registration fee.

If you have any questions, please email us at rbana2020@gmail.com”

While it was initially thought that the conference might be postponed until September, that option became untenable for a number of reasons.

Members are encouraged to read Ken’s method regarding alternative voting for this year.

It is hoped that we may be able

to hold the next conference in the Spring of 2021, perhaps in Atlanta.



**As Always,
Even in These Troubled
Times,
Think Burns**

Club News: Calgary and Winnipeg Burns Suppers

The Calgary Burns Club had their 44th Burns Supper on Friday 24th January in the Westin Downtown Calgary. In attendance were 450 guests who were treated to a wonderful 4 course meal on the night. The MC for the first part of the evening was Henry Cairney 1st VP Calgary Burns Club who introduced a very entertaining start to the evening comprising our Calgary Burns Club Singers led by Ron Pratt, grace by Jim Hope-Ross, the traditional "Removes" before each dinner course delivered by Andy Burnett and Jim Hutchens, the Calgary Police Service Pipe Band, the Address to the Haggis delivered by Dr Sandy Paterson, The Loyal Toast was delivered by Bill Laing and finally the poem "To A Mouse" orated by Ron Pratt.

The second part MC was Dr Paul Armstrong who introduced Major Andy Harrower the speaker for The Immortal Memory, The Toast to The Lassies by Gordon McCulloch, The Calgary Fiddlers and finally the Toast to Absent Friends by Paul Kane. All in all, a busy but great evening was had by all.



Left to right: Ken Montgomery, Henry Cairney, Andy Harrower and Paul Armstrong



CBC members and Andy Harrower.



The Calgary Burns Club Singers

The Winnipeg Robert Burns Club held their 113th Burns Supper on Saturday January 25th at their home for many years, the Holiday Inn Winnipeg South.

Following the piping in of members of the St Andrew's Society and the President's Table Compere Chris Halliday, Past President, directed a well organized programme which saw Colin Harris Address the Haggis, Past President Charles Cameron Toast the Lassies, with his wife Darlene reply on behalf of the Better Halves.

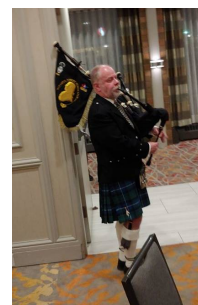
The highlight of the evening was the Toast to the Immortal Memory proposed by Past Federation President, and club Honorary Member Bobby Kane.

Musical entertainment was provided by alumni of the Flying Haggis Showband, (right) who entertained on the Main Stage of the Pavilion of Scotland during Winnipeg's Folklorama festival for many years.



Left: Bobby Kane

Right: Club Piper Kirby McRae with the new club pennon in use for first time



Tae a Virus

Former RBANA Secretary ad Webmaster Ron Ballantyne passed along the following which he received from the Secretary of the Florida Burns Club. Apropos of the current situation wee offer it here.

Twa months ago, we didna ken,
yer name or ocht about ye
But lots of things have changed since then,
I really must salute ye

Yer spreading rate is quite intense,
yer feeding like a gannet
Disruption caused, is so immense,
ye've shaken oor wee planet.

Corona used tae be a beer,
they garnished it wae limes
But noo it's filled us a' wi' fear
These days, are scary times.

Nae shakin hawns, or peckin lips,
it's whit they a' advise
But scrub them weel, richt tae the tips,
that's how we'll a' survive

Just stay inside , the hoose, ye bide
Nae sneakin oot for strolls
Just check the lavvy every hoor
And stock-take, your, loo rolls

Our holidays have been pit aff
Noo that's the Jet2 patter
Pit oan yer thermals, have a laugh
And paddle ' doon the waater '

Canary isles, no for a while
Nae need for suntan cream
And awe because o this wee bug
We ken tae be..19

The boredom surely will set in,
But have a read, or doodle
Or plan yer menu for the month
Wi 95 pot noodles.

When these run oot, just look about
A change, it would be nice
We've beans and pasta By the ton
and twenty stane o rice.

So dinny think yell wipe us oot
Aye true, a few have died
Bubonic, bird flu, and Tb
They came, they left, they tried

Ye might be gallus noo ma freen
As ye jump fae cup tae cup
But when we get oor vaccine made
Yer number will be up.

Willie Sinclair
March 2020

Jack Hume Heather & Thistle Trophy Deadline Nears

A reminder that the entry deadline for The Jack Hume Heather & Thistle Trophy, is close. The trophy is awarded annually for writing poetry in the style of Robert Burns. Jack Hume, who

passed away two years ago, was the founder of the H&T Burns Club and a staunch supporter of RBANA. 2020 is the fifth year of the annual competition for the trophy he presented. Entries are invited 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 Guida Hume, Jack's widow, author and a professor of English; RBWF representative Willie Gibson; and 2019 Hume Trophy winner Ronnie O'Byrne of the Halton Peel Club, ON. Entries will be submitted to the panel anonymously, and the panel's decision will be final.
- The winner will be announced in the Summer Edition of the Tattler in lieu of the cancelled RBANA Conference.
- This trophy will be awarded annually. The winner is responsible for returning the trophy to the RBANA Secretary prior to the following AGM & Conference. · Entries should be submitted by email to ireneandrobertboyd@sbcglobal.net
- The deadline for entries is **April 1, 2020**.



New Board Nominations

As detailed by Ken Montgomery elsewhere in this edition of the Tattler, despite the cancelation of the AGM it is proposed that the election of the new Board go forward. If the membership are agreeable the following will be acclaimed.

President Henry Cairney

Henry is an Ayrshire man and went to school in Irvine attending Loudon Primary, Loudon Montgomery and Irvine Royal Academy. He also spent many years before moving to Canada as a musician, playing accordion and keyboards in various bands, playing and singing many of Robert Burns's songs in many settings including Burns suppers.



Henry Cairney retired in August 2018 as a Director of Engineering from Suncor Energy in Calgary

Alberta Canada after 47 years in engineering, with the last 32 years in various management roles.

He is a Life member of Irvine Burns Club, a member of Medicine Hat Burns Club, Past President of the Calgary Burns Club, recycling as 1st VP of the same club and is VP of the Robert Burns Club of North America (RBANA), also Junior VP of the Robert Burns World Federation (RBWF). He has spoken and performed at many Burns suppers throughout North America and Scotland.

Henry has been married to Shona for the past 46 years, and they have a son and a daughter and 5 grandchildren.

Secretary/Treasurer Mathew P. Hill

Mathew Hill has been volunteering as the Secretary/Treasurer and Webmaster for RBANA for the last 2 years. He is a devoted member of his local Burns Club and has an eye for the continued longevity of both RBANA, as well as the appreciation for what Burns has brought the world today.



Mathew has the benefit of holding both American and Canadian citi-

Vice President Bill Fulton

Bill was born in Indiana and earned a degree at Ball State University's College of Architecture and Urban Planning. As a Certified Planner, he practiced for over 35 years in both the private and public sector. We worked in consulting firms in Iowa and Virginia. He finished his career in suburban Philadelphia as Executive Director of the Chester County Planning Commission. The highlight of Bill's career was the awarding "The Best Plan in America Award" in 1999 by the American Planning Association for LANDSCAPES,



Chester County's Comprehensive Plan.

Bill's interests remain reading, rugby, other sports, Scotland's Bard, Robert Burns and all things Scottish. Bill has been involved with many Scottish related organizations, including being a member of Clan Lamont, Clan Stewart Society of North America, Scottish Historic and Research Society of the Delaware Valley, Pennsylvania (President 1996-1998) Scottish Society of the Virginia Highlands; South Jersey Celtic Society, Caledonian Society of New York City, RBWF RBANA and RBANA USA Philadelphia 2018 AGM, Co-Convener. Bill currently serves as one of our three RBANA US Directors.

Mary Jim is Bill's soul mate and wonderful wife. He looks forward to promoting RBANA and moving the organization forward that will make them proud.

zenship. He was born in Texas, growing up in Arizona, California and Alaska, while moving to Canada in 2007 to pursue a career in coffee roasting at Swiss Water Decaffeinated Coffee Company in Burnaby, British Columbia. He now lives in Medicine Hat, Alberta and attained his Canadian citizenship in 2017.

Mathew also lived for 3 years in Germany.

Mathew looks forward to working with the new president and other RBANA executives in the future and has as his goals the re-working of the RBANA website, as well as improving the membership renewal process, as well as reaching out to new potential members.

He is a veteran presenter of many an Address to the Hag-

Mathew Hill continued

gis and A Mans a Man, and has wowed crowds in Scotland and Canada. He is also noted on doing a special presentation of a Mans a Man in German.

Canadian Director Major Andy Harrower CD

Andy Harrower was born in Alva, a hill village in Scotland, located in Clackmannanshire, Scotland's smallest county. The son of a butcher, and at age of 16, he joined the British army and the Royal Electrical Mechanical Engineers (REME).

Starting in 1979 Andy would later serve all over the world including Germany, Poland, Hong Kong, Iraq, Kuwait, Afghanistan and Canada.

Initially, it appears Andy did not have any real special interest in Burns, but it was when in Hong Kong, that he started getting into the Immortal Bard. Starting with little pieces, Andy soon became quite proficient with the major pieces such as Tam O' Shanter. It was also while in Hong Kong that Andy first started performing Burns before live audiences.

It is of interest that where Andy has done live Burns performances, or managed Burns dinners in Hong Kong, Germany, Morocco and Canada, he has not yet done so in Scotland. Andy's last gig was that of presenting the Immortal Memory at the 2020 Calgary Burns dinner.

In summary, where Andy served almost 32 years with the British military, he served with 20 units or regiments in 18 countries and lived in 14 married quarters. After retiring from the British army Andy began a new career with the Canadian army where he still serves as a major, and is stationed at London, Ontario. Andy also has five gorgeous daughters, two who live in Scotland and three that live in Canada.

Canadian Director Colin Harris

Colin is no stranger to RBANA, having served as Canadian Director, Secretary/Treasurer Vice-President and President as well as Editor of the Tattler for 10 years.

Born and raised in Winnipeg, he has been a member of the Winnipeg Robert Burns Club for 20 years, 19 of those on the Board as



New Board continued

President and Secretary (now Recording Secretary) and was closely involved with the organization of the 2007 Federa-

tion Conference and the 2011 RBANA Conference. In 2012 he was conferred with an Honorary Membership in the Winnipeg club. He also serves as Recording Secretary (non-executive) of the St Andrew's Society of Winnipeg, also a RBANA member, and as a Director of the Scottish Heritage Council of Manitoba

He is a collector of Burns related memorabilia, the first being a small ceramic model of Burns Cottage, by WH Goss which once belonged to his grandfather.

Canadian Director Brian Cumming

Brian Cumming was born in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada and has lived in Calgary Alberta for over 40 years. After graduating from Queens University, Kingston as a geological engineer, he has and continues to work in the oil and gas and financial industries in senior positions. Brian has also been a director for both public and private oil and companies, and has been married to Jan for 33 years.

Brian joined the Calgary Burns Club in 2017 and enjoys singing with The Calgary Burns Club Singers. He has served as Treasurer of the Calgary Burns Club in 2018-19 and as 2nd Vice President in 2019-20. He is also an official Crony with the Medicine Hat Jolly Beggars.

Prior to joining the Calgary Burns Club, Brian also served as a Scout leader for mentally challenged adults for over 25 years.

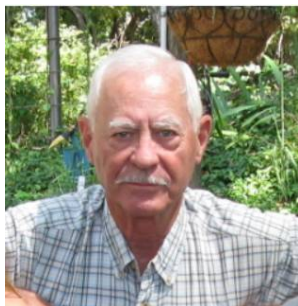
His interest in Robert Burns, Scottish culture and literature came from his maternal grandmother who was Scottish, married a Canadian soldier during WW I then emigrated to Canada after the war.



New Board continued

US Director George McClelland

An incumbent seeking a third term, George G. McClelland describes himself as a restless man of adventure. He is an army veteran and a retired Special Agent of the NCIS. He has a long background in law enforcement including five years with the California Highway Patrol, and one year with the International Police Task Force in the former Yugoslavia. He is a writer, amateur historian, bagpiper, motorcyclists and world traveller. He is a member of a number of organizations, among them, the Robert Burns Club of Atlanta, and the Robert Burns World Federation. McClelland and family, natives of California, have lived in the Philippines, Florida, Hawaii, and the United Kingdom. He and his wife have resided in Ellijay, Ga. since 1999.



US Director Mark Ferguson

Mark was born in Helensburgh, a provincial Scottish town situated on the River Clyde. He left Scotland after he graduated from Strathclyde University in Glasgow with a BEng in Production Engineering & Management and moved to St Albans, England where he first met his wife Elaine. In 1991, Mark transferred to work for The Coca-Cola Company and moved to Brussels, Belgium where his son Alexander was born in 1996. That same year Mark and his family moved to Vienna, Austria where his daughter Melanie was born in 1998. The next move was made in 2001 when the Ferguson's moved to Dublin, Ireland. Here Mark and his family enjoyed 8 happy years before making their final move to Atlanta, Georgia in 2009. Mark recently took early retirement from The Coca-Cola Company in Atlanta after a 32 year career and is now involved with other efforts. He is also an accomplished amateur singer and speaker with a particular love of Robert Burns. He has been a member of the Burns Club of Atlanta since 2015 and joined the Board as a director in 2018. He is a member of the Clan Fergusson Society of North America and has been serving RBANA as an appointed US Director in 2018. Mark became a naturalized US Citizen on December 6, 2019.



US Director Paul Kennedy

Paul is a retired US Army Aviation Officer with more than 30 years of service to his country. Paul is currently employed as an Audit Manager with the US Department of Defense, Office of Inspector General. Paul is the co-founder, past President, and current Vice President for Finance of the South Jersey Celtic Society (SJCS) whose mission is to promote and support Celtic Culture in and around Southern New Jersey. Paul was also the catalyst for the SJCS becoming a member of, and participating in, RBANA. Paul is a Celtic musician and performs regularly with friends and family at Irish and Scottish Festivals, Renaissance Fairs and other events. He is an avid reader, poetry lover and amateur classical guitarist. He has attended Burns Suppers in both Iraq and Afghanistan and in one case, addressed the Haggis in Baghdad only to do it again in New Jersey two days later. Paul is married to his wife, Lynn, of 45 years, and together they have 5 children and 14 grandchildren.



Birthplace Museum Wins Tourism Award

Robert Burns Birthplace Museum in Alloway was named Best Heritage Tourism Experience at the National Final of the Scottish Thistle Awards.

The award, which is sponsored by Historic Environment Scotland, celebrates Scotland's rich and vibrant heritage and those who bring it to life. Robert Burns Birthplace Museum encompasses 5 interlinked sites, the newest of which opened in 2010 and

the oldest, Burns Cottage, where Burns was born. They seek to connect their visitors with this landscape to discover the spaces and stories that

inspired him. The Scots language as used by Burns in his daily life and poetry is brought to life, engaging visitors and developing their understanding. Judges praised the museum for using visitor feedback to shape the experience, as well as the focus on inclusion and accessibility.

On receiving the award Caroline Smith, Operations Manager, said: "Everyone involved in the Museum strives to create a unique experience for our visitors and share the heritage of Burns: Scots Language and culture. Winning this award in such strong competition is a fantastic recognition, encouraging us to continue to deliver the best possible experience for all our visitors."

VisitScotland Regional Leadership Director Gordon Smith said: "Congratulations to Robert Burns Birthplace Museum on win-

ning the national Scottish Thistle Award for Best Heritage Tourism Experience. This is a fantastic achievement for the museum which works tirelessly to bring the life and work of Robert Burns to life and reach new audiences.

"The Scottish Thistle Awards give businesses and individuals working within tourism in Scotland the opportunity to earn the recognition and appreciation they deserve

from their own industry peers.

"The impact of tourism goes far beyond the holiday experience. It is vital to the Scottish economy, reaching every corner of the country, creating jobs and

bringing economic and social change."

Rebecca Brooks, chair of the Scottish Thistle Awards Industry Panel and VisitScotland Board member, said: "The Scottish Thistle Awards help shine the spotlight on individuals and businesses going above and beyond to create a destination and visitor experience worth talking about amongst our valuable tourism industry.

"On behalf of the industry panel, I would like to extend a huge congratulations to all of the national winners of the 2019/20 Scottish Thistle Awards. These awards are firmly established within the tourism industry in Scotland and these winners should feel very proud to join the prestigious roll of honour that celebrates innovation, success and excellence in the Scottish hospitality and tourism sector."



Robert Burns Worth Over £200,000,000 Per Year to Scotland

Attendees to recent Federation Conferences, and other members of Burns Clubs worldwide will remember the surveys undertaken as part of a study by the University of Glasgow to determine the economic benefit to Scotland. That report is out and according to the report the economic and cultural importance of Robert Burns is worth £203,000,000 (US\$262,000,000) (CAN\$361,000,000) to Scotland each year. The University of Glasgow study found that the "worldwide fascination" with the poet supports Scottish businesses.

It showed that investments in Scotland to recognise the bard, including the opening of the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum, have helped increase his value.

The report includes a number of recommendations to help grow the value of Burns' brand for Scotland.

The biggest economic benefit is Burns-related tourism, which brings in just under £155,000,000, almost two-thirds of which goes to Ayrshire and Arran where the poet was born and lived most of his life.

More than £200,000,000 is made through tourism, products and festivals celebrating the poet, and researchers also estimated that the Burns' brand is worth an additional £140,000,000 each year.

Prof Murray Pittock, (pictured right) who led the research, said the Scottish poet "still holds a huge fascination for a worldwide audience".

"Burns has universal appeal with his work being translated into every single major language including Russian, German, French and Chinese. While Auld Lang Syne is our New Year anthem and has been performed by everyone from Elvis Presley to Jimi Hendrix."

He added: "We hope that our research will help to inform and encourage Scotland to continue to develop plans to promote Burns at home and abroad. It also shows the great potential of Burns' brand to support regional inclusive growth from hotels and restaurants to food, drink and memorabilia."

The research showed that in the last two decades, a number of changes have taken place in Scotland recognising the poet's importance.

This includes the opening of the £23,000,000

Robert Burns Birthplace Museum in 2009. The

museum in Alloway is second only to Shakespeare among UK writers' museums in terms of visitor numbers.

Robert Burns' poems and songs have been translated into every major language, and almost 10 million people worldwide are estimated to attend Burns Suppers each year. These celebrations have an estimated value

of £7,000,000 to Scotland's economy.

The research also estimated that £20,000,000 is spent on Burns-related food and drink annually. Economy secretary Derek Mackay said: "It goes without saying that the cultural and societal importance of Burns the brand is enormous. In fact, the report highlights that the values and identity of

Robert Burns - the lover of nature, the innovator, and the humanitarian - resonate with the identity of modern Scotland.

The report makes a number of recommendations to use the Burns brand to "drive economic growth for Scotland."

These include increasing references to the poet on motorway road signs and renaming Prestwick Airport in honour of the bard.

It also asks the Scottish government to establish a Burns Humanitarian Ambassadors programme to recognise work carried out in Scotland and abroad.

