



# The Tattler



Autumn 2022 Edition



## President's Message



### 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

Greetings once again fellow members and guests, Since having taken over the gavel a few months back, quite a bit has already taken place. We have had two new Directors installed, Phyl Smith, and Charles Cameron; welcomed back two others, Bill Fulton and Ken Montgomery, and welcomed Jamie Osbourne as our new Secretary/Treasurer; all of whom are already actively working on several projects. Most recently, Bill Fulton was able to connect with the University of South Carolina to donate on behalf of RBANA, an historic document: *The Beauties of Burns Poems*, an 1819 publication of 38 Poems by Robert Burns in the form of a Chap Book. The University was very grateful for the donation and will display it appropriately in their museum.

Several of our members traveled to Dumfries, Scotland to attend the Robert Burns World Federation AGM to support outgoing President Henry Cairney and to Welcome Alan Beck as the new president of RBWF. While in Scotland, Henry laid two wreaths in honor of Robert Burns on behalf of RBANA: One at the Mausoleum at St. Michaels's Kirk, and the other at Brow Well. Those in attendance at the Conference included Brian Cumming, Andy Harrower, Colin Harris,

Continued pg. 2

### In This Issue:

President's Message .....	1
Jack Mann .....	3
RBWF Conference 2022 .....	4
Burns Ellisland Trust .....	6
Robert Burns, Poet & Political Radical ....	7
Winnipeg News .....	10
South Jersey Celtic Festival .....	11
Medicine Hat Jolly Beggars .....	12
Calgary RBANA Conference .....	15
More on Maria Riddell .....	16
CBC Singers Tour Scotland .....	17
CBC Singers at Wellwood .....	20
Retired Chain Nw On Display .....	21
The Last Arms Signed by Elizabeth .....	22

## President's Message (continued)

Ken Montgomery, Ronnie O'Byrne, Les Strachan, and May and Alex Crawley.

John Adams, President of the South Jersey Celtic Society (SJCS) and I were warmly greeted by the Medicine Hat Burns Club where I served as Co-Chieftain for the Night, along with Alan Beck for the 2022 Jolly Beggars. While there, I was able to meet a few members from the Calgary Burns Club, Medicine Hat Burns Club, and the Lethbridge Burns Club. I hope to meet many more of you at the AGM in May as the Calgary Club hosts the 2023 RBANA AGM.

I am excited for RBANA as we enter another year of celebrating the life and works of our favorite Bard. With COVID all but behind us, it is time to focus once again on coming together and enjoying each other's company as we celebrate our favorite poet and Scotsman at events such as our annual suppers, Jolly Beggars celebrations, ceilidhs, games, festivals, and other related events. Perhaps events such as the Tartan

Day Parade, which will be held the second week of April in New York City. I will be providing additional information in upcoming newsletters.

In short, I look forward to another great year of celebrations and hope to visit several more clubs over the next year and a half. Thank you to all who have been so active in your clubs as well as RBANA as an organization. I hope we can continue to build on our successes and continue to find new and exciting ways to share our mutual love of Robert Burns with people and like-minded organizations across North America.

Thank you,

Paul Kennedy  
President, Robert Burns Association of  
North America



Think Burns

# JOHN ALEXANDER MANN

August 31, 1928 – September 15, 2022

Jack was born in Edinburgh and emigrated to Canada with his wife Janet and two sons Ian and David, settling in London, Ontario. Jack became interested in the Poems and Songs of Robert Burns at a young age, since these were often introduced to many Scottish Schools and this interest continued throughout his life.

After getting settled, Jack joined the London Ontario Burns Club and eventually became President in 1986 for many years and later becoming President of The North American Association of Federated Burnsians. and was involved in the proposal to change the name to The Robert Burns Association of North America at the 2000 Conference in London, Ontario. Jack was also an Honorary President of RBANA.

Jack and Janet travelled extensively to many conferences in the U.K. Canada and the United States and made many great longtime friendships with fellow Burnsians.

Jack was an Electrician employed at General Motors



Diesel and despite a work related accident, Jack's indomitable spirit came to the fore and he continued to live his life the way he had always lived it. He took up wood carving and always continued in his interest in Robert Burns. Jack's carvings were truly a work of art. His favourite Robert Burns poem was "To a Mouse", reciting it at many events. He also did many carvings of the "wee sleekit, cowrin, tim'rous beastie" and gifted many of them to friends. I am

happy to have received one.

After Jack lost his Soul Mate Janet in 2016, he continued to drive and live in his own home. I am glad that I called Jack on his Birthday and enjoyed hearing about his grandsons and great grandchildren who delighted and enthralled him. He was so proud of his Family.

Jack was an upright, honest family man. He will be missed by many.

Submitted by Elma Connor.  
Past President RBANA  
1999 - 2002



**An honest man here lies at rest  
As e'er God with his image blest;  
The friend of man, the friend of truth,  
The friend of age, and guide of youth:  
Few hearts like his, with virtue warm'd,  
Few heads with knowledge so inform'd:  
If there's another world, he lives in bliss;  
If there is none, he made the best of this**

## Federation Meets in Dumfries on Historic Weekend

It was, perhaps the most memorable Conference in several years, if not generations; though not necessarily for reasons we would normally like to reference.

It began, unofficially, with the Thursday afternoon Board Meeting, while many were still travelling to Dumfries, when



word arrived of the passing of Queen Elizabeth, and the ascension of King Charles III.

As has become customary the past few years, the valiant among us participated in a Thursday night quiz, prepared

and compered by Federation Past President Jim Thomson, a six part affair with equal parts Burns and General Knowledge. The winning team this year included RBANA stalwarts Ronnie O'Byrne and Leslie Strachan.

Following a Friday morning walking tour led by local Burnsian Bobby Jess, which included a stop at the Theatre Royal and visits to the Globe Inn, with a tour there conducted by Jane Brown; Burns House below left); the Mausoleum in St Michael's Churchyard,



ter.”

The AGM was held, with video-casting worldwide, an initiative of Director at Large Peter Pringle, at 4:00 Friday afternoon. (The full video of the AGM is available on YouTube)

It will be of note to RBANA members that Les Strachan has retired from the Board as U.S. Director after ten years but has been re-

placed in the position by RBANA President Paul Kennedy. Ronnie O'Byrne continues as Director for Canada.

Friday evening was the opening dinner, with the usual Ceilidh following, highlighted by the Calgary Burns Club Singers and featuring a display of the wide array of talent the Burns Conferences are known for. The annual raffle once again saw the North American contingent do extraordinarily well, with multiple prizes won by Ken Montgomery, Leslie Strachan, Ronnie O'Byrne, and Colin Harris. Saturday dawned to good weather, and a choice for delegates. While some took in the third iteration of the Dumfries Walking Tour



was held, led by Jim Thomson on “The Ins and Outs of Tam O'Shan-

many took the coach ride out to Ellisland Farm or toured the Theatre Royal.

Following lunch at the hotel there was a final walking tour, or a trip to the Annandale Distillery, and a lecture by Ronnie O'Byrne on Burns in Edinburgh.

Continued pg. 5

## Dumfries Weekend (continued)

Following the lecture, singer/songwriter Edward Cairney entertained with selections from his ongoing **Robert Burns the New Songs** project to record all the songs of Robert Burns to new music.

The evening programme began with the installation of New President Alan Beck of Greenock, the first member of the Mother Club to serve as Federation President, and new Junior Vice President Peter Pringle of Kilmarnock. New Senior Vice President Neil McNair unfortunately was dealing with a family matter and will be installed prior to the first Board Meeting.

Following dinner, the programme began with President Beck, substituting for Lord Lieutenant Fiona Armstrong, was the first person in over 70 years, at a Federation event, to Toast the King.

In reply, Compere and Past President Jim Thompson read, in the circumstances, a poignant message from her late majesty. Past President and retired Literature Convenor Mike Duguid toasted the International Members, suitably replied to by retired U.S. Director Leslie Strachan.

Fiona Evans, President of the Dumfries & Galloway Burns Association, toasted the Federation. Fiona, like Alan Beck, was a substitute, with barely a day's notice, for Provost Tracey Little. Both the Provost and Lord Lieutenant withdrew, due to protocol, because of Her Majesty's passing.

Alan Beck replied to the final Toast, and Peter Pringle delivered the Vote of Thanks to all who had helped make the weekend a success. The evening entertainment featured dancing to The Reel Stramash Ceilidh Band, the Grand Prize Draws, a pound toss for a bottle of wine, and an auction, by auctioneer, Past President Angus Middleton, of donated items

and offers.

The Church service on Sunday morning at St. Michael's was very well attended and featured Hymns to familiar Burns' tunes, the Church choir singing A Rosebud By My Early Walk, and the Calgary Burns Club singers performing Amazing Grace and Abide With Me. The lessons were read by Henry Cairney and Alan Beck.

Following the service, there was a wreath laying at the mausoleum, with presentations on behalf of the Federation by Alan Beck, RBANA, by Henry Cairney, the Dumfries Burns Club, by David Baird, the Dumfries and Galloway Association, by Fiona Evans, and the Provost, by Events Convenor Ian McIntyre, representing Provost Little.



While many returned to the hotel or to their homes, a number attended lunch, hosted by Annandale Distilleries at the Globe Inn. Next year's Conference is planned to be held, again, in Scotland. Details as to venue and dates will be forthcoming in the next few weeks and months.

# Ellisland Museum & Farm Offers Membership



**Ellisland**  
MUSEUM & FARM

The Robert Burns Ellisland Trust, the charity formed to manage and maintain Robert Burns Farm in Dumfriesshire is asking for members and offering three tiers.

They are available at <https://www.ellislandfarm.co.uk/>

## Individual



**O**pen to all adults – under 16yrs go free

- ✓ Free access to Ellisland Museum & Farm
- ✓ Regular newsletter with the latest information on Ellisland and plans for the future
- ✓ Exclusive information on events and special discounts
- ✓ Exclusive information on events and special discounts

## The 1788 Circle

1788

£200<sub>yr</sub>

**O**pen to all federated Burns Clubs

- ✓ Free access to Ellisland for up to ten members
- ✓ Discounted meeting accommodation in the unique setting of Ellisland
- ✓ Recognition in Robert Burns Ellisland Farm website and annual report
- ✓ Exclusive access to events

## The Glencairn Circle

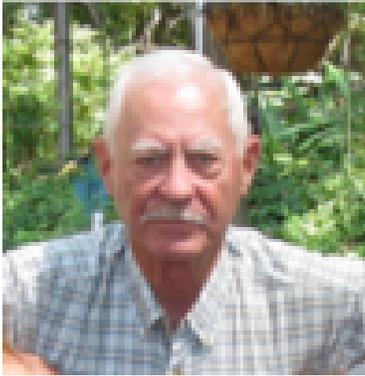


**O**pen to individuals and organisations

- ✓ Free access to Ellisland by special appointment
  - ✓ Invitation to a programme of events exclusive to Patrons' Circle members
  - ✓ Privileged use of the property including meeting facilities
  - ✓ Exclusive behind the scenes tours of Ellisland
- Our Corporate Glencairn Circle Membership currently starts at £1,000 and requires prior discussion.  
Please email us at [info@ellislandfarm.co.uk](mailto:info@ellislandfarm.co.uk)



## Robert Burns, Poet and Political Radical



Today the world is in turmoil. We are experiencing the 21st Century era of political dissent, radicalism if you please, but, it's not the first and will doubtless, not be the last. It was too in Burns' day. History reveals many such excursions into the minefields of political dissent especially in the French and American Revolutions, the silly War of 1812, and the American Civil War interrupted occasionally by spats with Indians, Mexico, and Spain. Radicalism, or who rails against the current government, will always be with us. They saw it in Great Britain in the 1700's, dissent fueled by what was happening in France and America. The reaction among the literate classes of the British population including Robert Burns, scared the monarchy and the upper social classes. Social change was in the air. Does Burns still affect us today? Not so much in America but he still draws attention of radicals active in the British Commonwealth.

Robert Burns was sort of a radical by which I mean while he despised tyranny in all of its manifestations, i.e.: the government that took advantage of its citizens through a class system and most definitely the Church which held great social power over the daily conduct of its parishioners (nearly everybody) he had to tread very carefully. While he didn't like government tyranny, he still accepted the Kings schilling as an exciseman. In the Scotland of Burns' era, conflict with the Kirk on issues of personal conduct, sin if you want, saw a spectacular rise in suicides, especially by young country women who succumbed to the temptations of the flesh. But, I stray from my point.

Most Americans only associate Robert Burns with annual Burns Dinner celebrations every January, the singing of Olde Lang Syne at dinners end and on New Years Eve. Beyond that most folks don't know a whit about Burns because most folks are busy trying to make a living, and basically unwilling to put in the extra effort looking up the meanings of the Broad Scots words Burns used almost exclusively in most of his poetry. It is in his poetry and his letters

where he reveals himself as the political radical he was. He cleverly camouflaged his political views so as not to alarm his government employers, the Excise, but they knew. It was no secret and its their efforts to protect his incognito that also makes up a part of the Burns story.

To understand the political Burns requires some knowledge of Scottish history of the period where many things unrealized by us 21st century citizens, are revealed about the times in which Burns lived. We get a fair glimpse into what was indeed a dangerous time for one to express political opinions against HM King George III, or his government. Revolution was in the air. It was the French and Americans revolting against monarchy and the privileged classes that demanded obedience to their rules that raised the specter of political repression in an empire about to lose its American colonies while at the same time, the French were about to lose their heads in their progressive descent into bloody totalitarianism.

The involvement of Burns the radical, Burns the revolutionary, is rarely if ever mentioned in our many addresses to the "Immortal Memory" at annual January dinners celebrating his birthdate. Instead Burns is romanticized by what Henry Mackenzie referred to as: *"that heav'n taught ploughman."* MacKenzie was a lawyer, a novelist and editor of *The Lounger* magazine. He was scornful of Burns's continued use of Broad Scots: *"which greatly damps the pleasure of the reader."* Burns admired some of Mackenzie's work, his favorite novel being *the Man of Feeling* (1771). While he liked his stuff to be published in *The Lounger*, Burns had to be careful because Mackenzie was a loyal supporter of Britain's Tory Pitt government. Mackenzie railed his anti-radical screed against supporters of the French Revolution and in particular the movement for radical reform they saw stirring in Britain.

Outside of what today's readers consider his lovely poetry, Burns's writings were genuinely political. According to Thomas Crawford, *"Almost everything that Burns ever wrote was political in the broadest sense of that word."* Even a casual look at his poems, songs and letters reveals a poet deeply concerned with a wide range of political issues that included revolution, war, radicalism, republicanism, religion, poverty, class inequalities and self-determination. Scots, being educated, understood the printed word and wanted to retain their Scottish

Continued pg. 8

## Robert Burns, Poet and Political Radical (continued)

cultural identity and understood perfectly what Burns was saying. So did the Ulster Irish radicals in Belfast, Northern Ireland who reprinted as much of Burns' rebellion related radicalism as they could gather.

Today's researchers cannot deny Burns' radicalism. Burns had been gifted by his father with an independent spirit. Some still claim that his politics were confused and ambiguous but were actually his opinions hidden in metaphors. We know Burns was an avid opponent of monarchy and slavery and was a dedicated champion of the rights of man. Burns actually contributed to a growing movement demanding political reform, an issue that directly involved Scots. His public contributions of course, were in his poetry and songs published under a pseudonym or an assumed name. "Scots Wha Hae" and "A Man's a Man" were two such songs. Prof. Jerry Caruthers, Univ. of Glasgow, puts it succinctly: "*In both these songs and surrounded by his like-minded Excise colleagues, he was hiding his politics in plain view.*"

Today's ruling class's politicians in Great Britain, monarchists and unionists alike, still try to claim him, politically, as "their own." For example, during Scotland's referendum for independence in 2014 the issue was raised of how Burns would have voted on Scottish independence and surprisingly, the arguments actually found voice in the public domain of the press and social media. Scottish Unionists contended that Burns would have supported the British state by voting against independence and vice versa. The primary targets of Burns' acid pen was the ruling class, the aristocratic base of power and privilege. In his poem Address of Beelzebub (1785) Burns attacks that class with a monologue considered "one of Burns' most savagely satirical poems." In it, Burns takes on the Highland Chieftains who opted to become Lords, Barons, Dukes and Earls, for their ill treatment of tenant farmers desperate to escape from poverty by emigrating to Canada and the Americas.

In the poem Burns demands the right for migrants to emigrate for reasons of economic liberty and freedom. In his The Twa Dogs (1785) Burns concocts a conversation between two dogs, contrasting the poverty of the rural poor with the luxurious lifestyle of the rural aristocracy. In The Jolly Beggars, aka: Love and Liberty (1787), Burns rejects organized society as well as organized salvation, meaning the Church and State, who demanded conformity to the

social norms of the era. It's not difficult to see where Burns stood and which political and social institutions he was renouncing:

*A fig for those by law protected!  
Liberty's a glorious feast!  
Courts for cowards were erected,  
Churches built to please the priest.*

Jacobitism, representing one side of the religious conflict between Catholicism and Calvinism, was a deadly issue in the United Kingdom for decades. The Catholic Stuart Rebellion of "45" had tainted his father, William Burness, with the aura of Jacobitism, causing him to write songs like: 'O Kenmure On and Awa' and 'Scots Wha Hae.'

The Editor of the Edinburgh Evening Courant published a protest article celebrating the Revolution of 1688 that reviled the Stuarts. Burns can speak for himself on the issue:

*Bred and educated in revolution principles,  
the principles of reason and common sense,  
it could not be any silly political prejudice  
that made my heart revolt at the harsh abusive  
manner in which the Reverend Gentleman  
mentioned the House of Stuart, and  
which, I am afraid, was too much the language  
of that day. We may rejoice sufficiently  
in our deliverance from past evils,  
without cruelly raking up the ashes of those  
whose misfortune it was, perhaps, as much  
as their crimes, to be the authors of these  
evils...*

*The Stuarts have been condemned and  
laughed at for the folly and impracticability  
of their attempts, in 1715 and 1745. That  
they failed, I bless my God most fervently,  
but cannot join in the ridicule against  
them... Let every man, who has a tear for  
the many miseries incident to humanity, feel  
for a family, illustrious as any in Europe,  
and unfortunate beyond historic precedent;  
and let every Briton, and particularly every  
Scotsman, who ever looked with reverential  
pity on the dotage of a parent, cast a veil  
over the fatal mistakes of the Kings of his  
forefathers.*

Sentimental as it was about the Stuarts Jacobitism, Burns instinctively knew theirs was a lost cause and he wrote: 'Ye Jacobites by name.' Neither did he harbor any illusion about the political nature of the Treaty of Union of 1707, expressing his dislike of the unpopular issue with these words:

## Robert Burns, Poet and Political Radical (continued)

*What force or guile could not subdue  
Thro' many warlike ages  
Is wrought now by a coward few  
For hireling traitor's wages.  
The English steel we could disdain,  
Secure in valour's station:  
But English gold has been our bane  
Such a parcel of rogues in a nation.*

As previously mentioned, radicalism was a driving force of Burns' production, his songs, poems and many letters revealing his empathy for the poor sots of his class, the tenant farmer, the hired ploughmen, merchants and the vulnerable poor who existed without hope and taxed into penury. It was a German family, Hanover, who in time became the face of the British monarchy. Of the inadequacies of the ruling House of Hanover he was very aware. He revealed his contempt in fifteen critical stanzas of his poem 'A Dream.'

Neither do we forget that the radical Burns, an avid consumer of newspapers, printed tracts and posts also became dedicated to internationalism and were inevitably, bound up with one another:

*For a that, and a' that,  
It's comin' yet for a' that,  
That Man to Man, the world o'er,  
Shall brithers be for a' that.*

What Burns was trying to achieve, the recognition of the ungodly status of people everywhere, was not only encapsulated in the brotherhood of Man, but in changing the conditions where no longer would thousands of people have to:

*.. labour to support  
A haughty lordling's pride.*

Burns despised the Gentry especially Lords, Dukes and Earls who lived lavishly on the labor of their tenants, except two, Basil William Douglas-Hamilton, aka: Lord Daer whose sympathies laid with the common people, and James Cunningham, 14th Earl of Glencairn who became a benevolent Patron and friend of Robert Burns.

Burns' sympathies for the France revolution dimmed considerably with the increasing bloodshed. He wrote:

*But vicious folk ay hate to see  
The warks o' Virtue thrive, man;  
The courtly vermin's bann'd the tree,*

*And grat to see it thrive, man!  
King Louis thought to cut it down,  
When it was unco sma', man;  
For this the watchman crack'd his crown,  
Cut aff his head and a', man.*

Burns' real political disposition can be seen in his various election Ballads written in 1789-90. The several compositions he published were: the 'Election Ballad for Westerha', 'The Five Carlins', and the 'Election Ballad at Close of the Contest for Representing the Dumfries Burgh, 1790'. Unquestionably, unlike his radicalism against the conformity of their betters, these were unquestionably, but not inevitably pro-Tory.

In 1795, Burns did turn to the Whigs with four Ballads to support of Patrick Heron of Kerroughtree which shows Burns' 'interpreting the French Revolutionary doctrines in terms of the general Whig demands for Parliamentary Reform'. When the threat of French invasion of Britain, not about the original principles behind France's revolution, caused him to seriously doubt the intentions of France. He wrote, 'Does Haughty Gaul Invasion Threat?':

*... For never but by British hands  
Maun British wrangs be righted !"  
"... While we sing God save the King  
We'll ne'er forget the People!*

That the threat of a French invasion was on everybody's lips and anxious to demonstrate his pro-British feelings, Burns joined the Dumfries Volunteers, a volunteer militia of foot (Infantry), ready to resist. Well, the French didn't come and Burns, suffering the ill effects of his rheumatic conditions and not responding to his health-giving dips in "The Well," Burns reconciled himself to his coming death. One of the last persons to sit at his bedside was the Reverend James MacDonald who apparently spoke with Burns about his 'staunch republicanism and radical politics.' Burns biographer and scholar, Robert Crawford, in his first biography about the Bard, wrote: "this is Burns the spirited rebel, Bard of Sedition, even Blasphemy". We should too. We celebrate Burns but not as a radical exponent of the Enlightenment but as a champion of the oppressed who made his historical mark in the true tradition of revolutionary change.

Don't you love it? I do.

George McClellan  
USA Director

## Winnipeg Robert Burns Club Elects New Board

The Winnipeg Robert Burns returned from its summer hiatus with the promise of a full year unimpeded by lockdowns and viruses. October 15 the club held its Annual General Meeting and elected a new slate of officers for the forthcoming two years, ending an extended three year term for the preceding board.

RBANA Canadian Director Charles Cameron (right) was acclaimed as the new President, his second tour of duty in the position,



having previously served from 2015-17.

Janet Thompson, Darlene Cameron and Colin Harris retained their positions as Vice President, Treasurer, and Recording Secretary respectively. Linda Kane joined the board as Membership Secretary, succeeding Charles.

Also joining the Board as Directors were Dorothy Doran, Jean Lindsay, the club's longest serving active member, and Ashoke Dasgupta.

Preparations are in hand for the revival of the club's Burns Supper on January 25<sup>th</sup>, the first since 2020.

## Winnipeg's St Andrew's Society Readies For Big Night

The St Andrew's Society of Winnipeg are preparing for their annual St Andrew's Dinner & Dance.

The 151<sup>st</sup> event is set for Saturday November 26 at the historic Fort Garry Hotel.

With entertainment from the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders Pipes and Drums and the bands of HMCS Chippewa and pop-up pipers tickets are \$175 for SASOW members,



\$185.00 for non-members.

Earlier in the month, a new Board will be elected at the Society's Annual General Meeting.

The Society's new President will be Pamela Simmons, the Society's second woman president, succeeding Evelyn Mitchell.

In addition, the Society has launched its Annual Great Whiskey Raffle, the final draw to be held at the December Board Meeting.

# South Jersey Celtic Society Holds Second Annual Celtic Festival and Highland Games on October 8

The South Jersey Celtic Society (SJCS) held its second annual Celtic Festival and Highland Games on Saturday, October 8 at Liberty Lake in Bordentown, NJ. More than 1,000 people attended the event, with a portion of the proceeds benefiting local pipers and Celtic dance troupes, including the Rancocas Valley Pipers and the Celtic Flame Irish Dancers.



For the adults in attendance, SJCS poured fine craft beers from Spellbound Brewing and Third State Brewery and wine and

mead from Valenzano Winery. SJCS President John Adams and Vice President Paul Kennedy lead a whiskey tasting sponsored by Brown-Foreman and attended by highly engaged whiskey enthusiasts learning the fine art of drinking whiskey.

Musical acts performed throughout the day including regional favorites The Natterjacks, Seamus & CJ, Joe Mullin & Son, The Shanty's, and the Bogside Rogues. Strolling pipers from the Rancocas Valley Pipers added to the Celtic ambience,

which was enhanced by lively performances from local Irish dancers.

In addition to musical entertainment, at-



tendees were treated to a true spectacle of athletic prowess with the Highland Games competitions.

The games were led by Robert Meulenbergh, PhD, associate professor of physics at the University of Maine by day, and a power-lifting, caber tossing champion by night. Emy Brown won Athlete of the Day and set a 14 foot personal record for Weight Over the Bar. The games and results are registered with on the North American Scottish Game Athletics (NASGA) at <http://www.nasgaweb.com/dbase/main.asp> According to SJCS president John Adams, this year's festival had twice the excitement with large crowds cheering Emy on as she set her personal record in the Weight Over the Bar and as she and other competitors turned the Caber in the Caber Toss. "This was our 2<sup>nd</sup> Celtic Festival and the first time we went from a Highland Games demonstration to an actual competition were the re-



Continued pg. 12

## South Jersey Celtic Society Holds Second Annual Celtic Festival and Highland Games on October 8 continued



sults mattered and the crowd could participate by cheering on their favorite athletes,” said Adams. “There was something

for everyone at the Celtic Festival and I think we achieved our goal of educating the public about the heritage, traditions, language, art, music, and



culture of the Celtic people.” Those who came to enjoy Celtic cuisine were not disappointed. Food trucks from Fiona Fish & Chips and D & D were on site to serve traditional fish and chips, crab cakes, and pulled pork sandwiches among other treats. This was also

our first year in which Clans invited to the event spearheaded by Clan Donaldson. The SJCS would like to thank all of those who



participated in the Festival or came out to support it. The Celtic Festival and Highland Games was co-presented by the SJCS and the New Jersey Renaissance Faire.

Submitted by Angela Collom SJCS

## THE MEDICINE HAT BURNS CLUB'S 13<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL JOLLY BEGGARS BANQUET

Where the formal event of this function was held Saturday, 15 October 2022, the Club



hosted a special Ceildh at the Montgomery Pub for the special out of town guests on the Friday night before.

At the Ceildh, guests were able to relax and enjoyed the finest whiskies, great entertainment and Haggis pizza. We were also pleased to have Alan Beck do a few songs, including

Red Red Rose for Ken's wife Brenda (left) (and she still hasn't stopped crying), as well as some Robert Service poems and other treats presented by Club Bard Bill Cocks and others.

This would be another unique Jolly Beggars Banquet as last year, where the Club featured Henry Cairney as its special guest and Chieftain o' the Nicht; Henry then (a first) was the RBANA president and also the RBWF president at the same time. This year we were pleased to have not only Alan Beck of Greenock, Scotland, the



Continued pg. 13

## THE MEDICINE HAT BURNS CLUB'S 13<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL JOLLY BEGGARS BAN- QUET

recently installed RBWF president, but also RBANA president Paul Kennedy of Mount Holley, New Jersey both attend.



Ceildh guests relaxiing



Calgary Burns Club entertaining at Ceildh



Bill Cocks entertaining at Ceildh

Further, our special guests included John Adams of Eastampton, New Jersey, president of the South Jersey Celtic Society and Charlie Malone, the president of the Calgary Burns Club. This was the first time the Club had American guests and it was a real treat and honour.

Other special guests at the dinner would include Club friends, Lt. Colonel Steve Burke CD, Commanding officer of nearby Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Suffield, his Regimental Sergeant Major, Phil Paquette CD, and Lt. Colonel Tim Holmes, the Commander of the British Army Training Unit Suffield (BATUS) that operates out of CFB Suffield, and his Regimental Sergeant Major Mark Riley. Also attending for the first time were City of Medicine Hat council members, Darren Hirsch and Andy McGrogan.

On the Saturday morning while the set up crew was busy at the event venue, the Medicine Hat Golf & Country Club, the special guests were given a tour of Medicine Hat, and this included a specially booked tour of the Regimental Museum of the South Alberta Light Horse (SALH). After a light lunch the gang then retired back to the host hotel to rest and polish their brass for the big event.

Unfortunately we learned that Charlie Malone had tested positive for COVID earlier in the

day and would not be attending. The Club however has guaranteed him a seat at next year's dinner.

Transported to the venue by the Club's hired black limousine bus, the special guests arrived to the sounds of the pipes played by Acting Club Piper Rob Cowan, and were then met and greeted by Club President Andy Cowan,

the Club's MC for the evening, Kevin Conrad, and the Club's Poosie Nansie (hostess). Once the guests were seated at the Club's custom banquet table where all guests sit together, (below) the program, which was extensive,



kicked off and the evening then commenced. Our MC did a fantastic job keeping the program on time, and

actually helped shorten it.

It is noted that the Club had planned to do a special tribute for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II to celebrate her Platinum Jubilee and 70 years on the throne. Her recent death however, changed our plans so we included another tribute to Her Majesty and the new monarch, His Majesty, King Charles III.

In addition, as the local military are good friends of the Club, BATUS was celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of being in Canada, and they also were recognized.

The six course meal served featured smoked salmon, Cock o' Leekie soup, stacked haggis with whisky sauce, sorbet, rack o' lamb and Topsy Laird with shortbread and Major

## THE MEDICINE HAT BURNS CLUB'S 13<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL JOLLY BEGGARS BAN- QUET

Andy's custom Athol Brose, and was superb. The entertainment was also fantastic, and the presentations done by Alan Beck, (right) Lt Colonel Holmes and Lt Colonel Burke CD were brilliant. It is also noted that the attending Cronies were also treated to RBANA



President Paul Kennedy playing guitar and singing A Mans a Man. (left) Of additional interest, and note, the Club has been privi-

leged to have access to the craftsmen at the BATUS Workshop who do unbelievable workmanship with all they manufacture (including the Club's Jolly Beggar table), and that also includes that of making the most fantastic trenchers.

For those not in the know, a trencher is a custom made wooden bowl used to transport the haggis from the kitchen when doing the address. On reading the Address to a Haggis you will also note there is Burn's reference to 'Groaning trencher, there ye fill'. Where the Club presented one trencher to the RBWF at their recent AGM in Dumfries, the Club was also pleased to present one to Alan Beck and another to Paul Kennedy (below) at the 2022



Jolly Beggars due their being the Chieftain and Co-Chieftain of the night. The new attending Cronies were all invest-

ed into the Club's Order of the Monkey (that's another story), many new friends were

made, and the event was another great success. The Club is already planning for next year and additional photos and the event program shall be available for viewing on the Club website ([www.mhburnsclub@shaw.ca](http://www.mhburnsclub@shaw.ca))



in due course.

Submitted by,  
*Ken Montgomery*  
MHBC Secretary  
Past President RBANA  
Canadian Director RBANA



## Calgary Burns Club to Host RBANA Conference in May



Fellow RBANA members, I hope you all have had a great summer and autumn. I was pleased to attend the RBWF 2022 conference in Dumfries from September 9 - 11 with my wife Jan Boydol, after completing a once in a lifetime concert tour

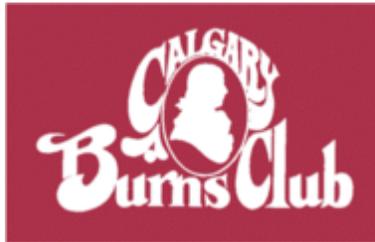
with the Calgary Burns Club Singers in Scotland before the RBWF conference.

Post Covid, I was very happy to be able to meet many RBANA and RBWF members who I had only met previously on Zoom. The face-to-face meetings were brilliant and both Jan and I met many new friends at the RBWF conference. It was a roaring success.

The 2023 RBANA Conference is in Calgary, Alberta Canada from May 5-7/2023.

As chairman of the Conference committee, I would like to see you in Calgary from May 5 -7/22. Please mark the date.

We will have events starting May 4/23 for those attending a wee bit early, with the Conference commencing on Friday May 5/23 with a ceilidh showcasing the talents of



RBANA members. The AGM and formal dinner will be May 6/23 with an Immortal Memory from Phyl Smith, RBANA director and member of the RBANA Academy of Speakers .

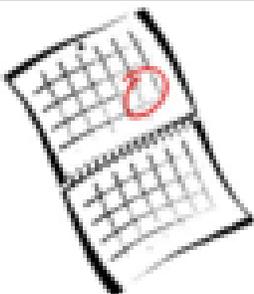
The AGM and Conference will be held at the Delta Hotel Calgary South. The address is 135 Southland Drive S.E, Calgary Alberta. Conference fees will include dinners Friday and Saturday night. Two bottles of complementary wine are included Saturday night. Hotel rooms are not included in the conference fee; however, we were able to get reduced rates for conference attendees.

More information will be provided shortly. Please stay tuned for further updates and a conference registration form.

See you next May 5-7/23 in Calgary.

Yours in Burns  
Brian R. Cumming  
Canadian Director, RBANA

## Mark The Calendar - Save The Date



U.S. Director and the Secretary of the **Robert Burns Club of the St. Andrew Society of Sarasota**, Phyl Smith reports that their Burns Supper will be held on Saturday January 21 at the Palm Aire Country Club in Sarasota.



## More On Maria Riddell

In the summer 2021 Tattler I wrote an article about Maria Riddell. I find her so fascinating that I have a reproduction painting of her portrait in our sitting room (below) and admire her every day. The reproduction is not as lovely as the original portrait by Sir Thomas Lawrence (below, left) but it makes me happy.



Maria is always surprising me - she had a fascinating

that helped to decipher the secrets of Egyptian hieroglyphs which had baffled philologists for more than 40 generations.

The fact that Maria was the aunt of Bankes is, I think, another fascinating part of her story. Her portrait hangs in his home together with his mother's portrait, Frances Woodley Bankes (sister to Maria) and the sisters' mother, Frances Woodley. All three women are very beautiful. There is a short description of the family relationships at <http://www.elisarolle.com/queerplaces/uvwxyz/William%20John%20Bankes.html>. With her place in the



Maria Woodley (1772 - 1808)  
Mrs Walter Riddell  
Thomas Lawrence (1769 - 1830)



Frances Woodley (1760 - 1823)  
Mrs Henry Bankes II  
George Romney (1734 - 1802)



Frances Payne (1738 - 1813)  
Mrs William Woodley  
Joshua Reynolds (1723 - 1792)

All Credit to National Trust Kingston Lacy

life of her own, apart from her fame as a friend of Robert Burns.

Recently, I was reading an article in *BBC History Magazine*, (Vol.23, no. 10, page 42) concerning "*The Race to Decipher Ancient Egypt Sacred Scripts*" when a photograph I recognized caught my attention. It was Kingston Lacy in Dorset, the stately home where Maria's portrait hangs. As I read further, I remembered that Maria was the aunt of the former wealthy owner of the house, William John Bankes, who had brought the Philae obelisk from Egypt to decorate his grounds. Apparently this obelisk gave clues

Bankes family, I believe that Maria has a connection to another piece of brilliant history. Without the pieces of the puzzle supplied by the obelisk her nephew collected, who knows when the hieroglyphs would have been deciphered.

No doubt there is even more to discover about the delightful Mrs. Riddell - I shall keep on looking!

Submitted by Eileen G. McKoy

## Calgary Burns Club Singers Tour Scotland Before Conference

The Calgary Burns Club (CBC) Singers completed a very successful tour of Scotland in late August and early September of this year. The Singers sang at numerous venues across Dumfries and Galloway, Ayrshire and in Glasgow racking up a grand total nine official performances, interspersed with some memorable impromptu late-night performances in various halls and hostelries.



The audience numbers regularly ranged from the 100s to the 1,000s, with the singers reaching out and entertaining folks of all ages and from far flung places across the globe. The trip went a long way to furthering the global reputation of the CBC. The Singers also fulfilled the honourable role of being true ambassadors for Calgary, Canada and RBANA.

It all started off in mid-August when 16 intrepid Singers independently departed Canada by various routes, and headed over the pond to the home country of Burns. Regrettably we had to leave without one our finest singers, Maurice McTamney, as his visual disability carer took ill just days before departure. Maurice was sadly missed, but was not forgotten in our performances.

Miraculously, without a hitch, the 16 singers all turned up unscathed in Dumfries at the Carindale Hotel in the days preceding the first performance in Kirkcudbright. This performance was held on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> August in the open air at the Harbour square in Kirkcudbright.



The performances comprised of a set of 8 songs, and the Singers were first on the bill of the “Scottish Night” that forms part of

the summer long Kirkcudbright Summer Festivities.

Fortunately, the weather gods were shining upon the singers, and they were able to entertain an audience close to 1,500 people at the “Scottish Night”. The performance received excellent coverage in the local Kirkcudbright newspaper the next day.

There then followed a rather humbling moment as the grand might of the Singers were hammered

soundly 3-0 in a tug of war by the Kirkcudbright Tug o’ War team. Humbling as the Kirkcudbright team were all un-

der the age of 12 (but there were a lot of them, so many of them in fact they have not been defeated in over 50 years!!). With the Singers tails firmly between their legs after the sound beating they retired to drown their sorrows in a local Hostelry, the Masonic Arms. Fortunately, the bus back to Dumfries was late leading to the first of number of impromptu performances by the Singers that raised the rafters of the clientele in the Masonic Arms. A mighty fine night was had by all, and the Singers were off to a flying start. There then followed a performance the next



evening on Friday the 26<sup>th</sup> August at St. Theresa's Roman Catholic Church in Dumfries. It was a double bill with the Singers doing 2 sets of songs along with 2 sets from the Dumfries Male Voice Choir.

The diverse set of songs chosen by both singing groups complemented each other very well, and were further enhanced by the excellent acoustics in the Church. There then followed the most incredible spread of home baked foods being served in the adjoining Church hall all washed down with some hearty refreshments. With both singing groups now re-fuelled there then followed another memorable impromptu sing-song accompanied by a wide variety of beautifully played instruments. Yet again the Singers went home to the Carindale Hotel full of cheer and with great memories.

If that was not enough fun the Singers then hit the road again from Dumfries back down to Kirkcudbright on Saturday the 27<sup>th</sup> August in what was to be the pinnacle of the trip, performing at the Kirkcudbright Tattoo. The Tattoo is the culmination of the Kirkcudbright Summer Festivities with the centre of the town closed off to traffic, and one key street, St. Cuthbert's Street, set up as one long open-air venue. The Singers were near the end of the bill of entertainment for the evening, and when they came on there were estimated to be close to 3,800 people in attendance.

Under the floodlights proudly wearing their Calgary white cowboy hats the singers performed a set of 8 songs. At the end of the set the Singers marched off the stage along St. Cuthbert's Street to rapturous applause, and then returned for the



final medley march accompanied by three pipe bands and one brass band serenading the audience. If this was not enough the Singers returned back down to Kirkcudbright the following morning to sing a short set of songs to the congregation at Kirkcudbright Parish Church on Sunday the 28<sup>th</sup> August.

After a whirlwind of 4 performances in 4 days the Singers had a well-earned rest day before moving on from Dumfries to Ayrshire where they decamped to the Park Hotel in Kilmarnock. On Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> August the Singers performed at the New Laigh Kirk in Kilmarnock where 2 extensive sets were performed compressing 24 songs.

Not to be outdone by the previous performance, the following evening on Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> August the Singers delivered another couple of packed sets of 24 songs, this time at the Wellwood Centre in Irvine. Both performances were very well received and to packed audiences in the heartland of Ayrshire and Burns country. (More on the Wellwood experience in a separate article)

Alas it was time to depart Ayrshire, but before half the Singers returned back to Canada a performance was held on Thursday the 1<sup>st</sup> of September in Glasgow at the Renfield St Stephens



Continued pg. 19

Parish Church, where 22 songs were sung over two sets. The remaining half of the Singers numbering 8 stayed on in Scotland for a further week to attend the Robert Burns World Federation (RBWF) conference at the Carindale Hotel Dumfries. Unfortunately, in the intervening period two of the singers had to drop out due to contracting Covid. Still, the six remaining singers did sneak in a set at the Cèilidh held at the conference on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> September, performing a set of 7 songs along with an encore that was to the last performance of the trip to Scotland.

The trip was without doubt one of the most notable events in the last decade of the Calgary Burns Club, with many new friends and memories acquired along the way. An army of people were involved in making this trip

so successful, but special mention should go to Ron Pratt as the leader of the Singers for curating so many successful performances. In addition, Henry Cairney and Ian McIntyre have to be congratulated for their tireless input making a complex set of logistics seamless. Finally, the Singers would not have done this trip without the sterling support from their respective wives and partners. We love you all, dearly.

Submitted by Charlie Malone  
President, Calgary Burns Club

Photos credited to Anne Copland and Janet Armstrong.

**T**he 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. Thanks to all those who submitted articles for this issue, including Paul Kennedy, Ken Montgomery, George McLellan, Brian Cumming, Charlie Malone, Eileen McKoy and Elma Connor. The deadline for submissions for the Winter Edition is Wednesday February 15, to allow reports on Burns Suppers to be submitted. The Winter edition will be published and distributed February 28.

**2023 RBANA AGM – CALGARY**

**WHETHER ATTENDING OR NOT**

**WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!**

**FOR DETAILS CONTACT**

**KEN MONTGOMERY – RBANA AGM SPONSORSHIP CHAIR**

**at [monty855@shaw.ca](mailto:monty855@shaw.ca)**

## Ticket Stampede for Calgary Singers at Wellwood Burns Centre & Museum

This article appeared in the latest issue of the RBWF newsletter *The Vision*. We reprint it here with the kind permission of the Editor and the Federation.

When Henry Cairney, the then President of RBWF, learned that his colleagues from The Calgary Burns Club Singers were planning to attend this year's RBWF Conference in Dumfries at which he was stepping down as President, he was delighted. For not only would the members of The Calgary Burns Club Singers be able to entertain the Conference delegates, but could also perform in the Irvine Burns Club's Wellwood Centre where Henry's love of Burns and his Works were nurtured initially during his involvement with the local Burns Club while attending Irvine Royal Academy.

As a result, the sight of burly Canadian gentlemen wearing the unusual sartorial combination of Kilts and Stetsons brought traffic in Irvine's Eglinton Street to a halt on a sunny late August afternoon when Irvine's President, Margaret Greenlees, along with NAC's Provost Anthea Dickson, welcomed members of the Calgary Burns Club Singers to Wellwood Burns Centre & Museum. During their afternoon tour of the Museum, the Canadian visitors were able to see the club's copy of the First Edition of Burns's "Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect", as well as its unique collection of manuscript poems, letters, and paintings again available for viewing since Wellwood re-opened in early July after being closed for 18 months.

Later in the evening, a capacity audience thoroughly enjoyed a lively concert of an ec-



lectic mixture of songs familiar to a Burns audience but with other musical items being aired through other traditional Scottish and Irish melodies.

Afterwards, Irvine Burns Club's President Margaret Greenlees said: "It was a delightful event that the Wellwood audience thoroughly enjoyed but what was equally clear was that our Canadian visitors were also enjoying being back among their Scottish friends. When it became known that the Calgary Burns Club Singers were coming to Irvine, there was a real stampede for tickets and that was fully justified over what was a fun evening that will be long remembered."

Irvine has several strong links with their Canadian counterparts developed over the years with the late Sam Gaw and John Inglis having proposed The Immortal Memory in Calgary in 1991 and in 1992 respectively. More recently, Angus Middleton, the current Vice-President of the Irvine Burns Club and a Past President of RBWF, proposed The Immortal Memory in Calgary in 2016, while Irvine's Bill Nolan also addressed The Calgary Burns Club during one of his visits to Canada during his RBWF Presidential Year in 2018/19.

## Retired RBANA President's Chain of Office on Display in Kilmarnock

The now retired RBANA President's Chain of Office, which has been succeeded by the recently commissioned new one, is now on permanent display at Burns Federation Headquarters in Kilmarnock.

Past President of the Federation Mark Sherland has passed on a photo of the framed badge and ribbon, which includes an explanation and a photo of Henry Cairney, the last RBANA President to wear the old badge, along with examples of our also retired ribbons for the board. (Canadian Director, left, and Secretary-Treasurer, right)



**F**ederation President Alan Beck has passed along a facsimile of the last Arms signed by the late Queen Elizabeth.  
We include it in tribute.

