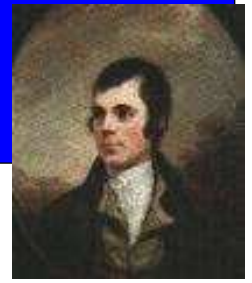


# The RBANA Tattler



Autumn Edition 2011

## Officers and Directors:

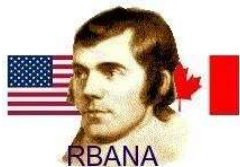
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The Robert Burns Association of North America.  
Club # 1024

Affiliated with the Robert Burns World Federation  
Ltd.  
Kilmarnock, Scotland.

## Words from the President

Summer is past, Fall is upon us and all the activities that will follow in the next year where we Burnsians have opportunity to meet, share and become involved.



I am happy to inform you that the 2012

RBANA conference will be held in Williamsburg, Virginia. (see page 7) In response to the criteria set by the association's executive, namely that the venue be an attractive destination, can be readily accessed by "Train, Plane & Automobile" and at an appropriate time of year, taking account of climate etc. the conference committee visited Williamsburg in early July and following some serious constructive negotiations with a number of hotels have contracted with the Hospitality Inn, for the 27th, 28th & 29th, April 2012.

Byron Adams, an independent member and former RBANA director, resident in Virginia, will be our "man on the ground." Leslie Strachan has also volunteered to be involved in that capacity.

Needless to say, I am excited. The notification will be on the website as details are confirmed.

The reception of that announcement at the Robert World Burns Federation Conference in Peebles was very positive and we expect a goodly number will join us.

The Conference in Peebles was very well attended and was the highlight of our trip to Scotland. At the Federation AGM a moment of silence was held for Frank Campbell, Jock Smith & Donna his wife. There were 16 Canadian delegates; Calgary, Winnipeg, Niagara Falls, and Halton Peel were well represented.

The weather was indeed cool but thankfully little heavy rain while we were there. Our vacation took us from Glasgow to Nairn then to Banchory, South to Lanark and on to Ayrshire.

We visited the Cairn at Leglen Wood, where we met a visiting group from Kyle Academy. The following day we visited the new Burns Birthplace Museum in Alloway, and spent time in Ayr.

Making our way South, we visited the recently erected statue in

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# Frank Campbell

Born - Ardrossan, Ayrshire — Died - Barrie, Ontario

1930 — 2011

**I**t is with sadness and regret, once again, that we report the death of a stalwart of RBANA. Frank Campbell died on July 5<sup>th</sup> 2011.

Frank was a dedicated Burnsian and Immediate Past President of The Robert Burns Association of North America.

Frank was born in Glasgow in 1930. At the age of 4 he moved with his family to Ardrossan in Ayrshire. He was educated in Irvine and was proud of his connections to Burns Country.

Frank married Jean Scott and in 1952 they immigrated to Toronto, Canada with their son Frank Jr.

Frank was deeply involved with the Credit Union at his place of work, taking on increased responsibility, which led to his being hired by a US bank in New York, for a senior management position, in 1976.

On retirement Frank & Jean his wife moved to their holiday home in Palmetto, Florida, where he continued to stay until shortly before his death.

After his marriage to Jean, his father-in-law, John Scott, introduced Frank to the Works of Robert Burns, but it was not until many years later that he became actively engaged in writing, speaking and the portrayal of Scotland's National Bard.

While a resident of Palmetto, Florida, Frank was an active member of the St Andrew's Society of Tampa Bay. The St Andrew's Society of Sarasota and a founder of the Burns Club of Sarasota. He was a regular contributor to their Burns suppers and other occasions.

Frank was a member of and contributor to, the Robert Burns World Federation Ltd. and a regular attendee at the annual conferences.

In 2006, Frank was elected Vice-President of The Robert Burns Association of North America, and in 2008, President, a position in which he served for 2 years, despite being in ill health.

Frank published a number of books giving his impression and interpretations on the life and works of Roberts Burns. He was also an accomplished poet.

His Son, Frank Jr. daughter-in law, Anne and grandchildren, Greg and Melissa survive Frank.

We do not know if it was coincidence or good planning by Frank but he died on the same date as his beloved Jean, who died July 5<sup>th</sup> 2006

**If there's another world, he lives in bliss,  
If there is none, he made the best of this**

**R. Burns.**



## Words from the President continued

New Cumnock, at the Mary Morrison Memorial Garden, then on to Dumfries, where we enjoyed a wonderful overnight at Friars Carse Hotel, before making our way to Peebles the next day.



Friars Carse Hotel

It is by our attending such gatherings that we feel very much part of the world wide Burns family. It brings a sense of belonging and friendships are developed and nurtured.

Back on 24th July a number of members of the Halton Peel Burns Club gathered with Mr. John Little and several members of the former Bonnie Doon Burns Club. We met at Gage Park in Hamilton ON

Happiness is but a name  
Make content and ease thy aim  
Ambition is a meteor-gleam  
Fame, an idle restless dream

Lines Written in Friars' - Carse Hermitage; 1788 R Burns

for a service of remembrance at the Cairn which was erected there in 1984.

The service was conducted by Rev Dr. Francis Chisholm who officiated at the inaugural dedication. It was noted that the cairn was in need of some maintenance and Duncan Beattie offered to approach the authorities about it.

I wish you and your various clubs and associates an active, meaningful season. Do mark your calendar for April 2012.

See you in Williamsburg.



John Little & Rev Chisholm

*Chris Balladyne*

## Anthropologists Recreate Robert Burns' Face

Scientists are using the latest reconstruction technology to recreate the face of Robert Burns.

The result will be a 3D model of his head, which is due to be revealed this month.

The man behind the idea is Rab Wilson, the Burns' fellowship writer for Dumfries and Galloway.

Wilson has been working with facial anthropologists at Dundee University, using a cast of the bard for a true likeness.

Mr. Wilson said that, up until now, the image of the poet had been based on paintings completed during

his lifetime, primarily that of Alexander Nasmyth.

The new model is almost complete but is still waiting on a wig and its eyeballs.



Mr. Wilson believes that the public will be impressed by the final outcome of the project.

"I think people are going to be pleasantly surprised by the way that Burns looks," he said.

"We are going to see the man as he would have looked walking down the streets of Mauchline in 1785.

"I think if folk then could see this they would say: 'That is Burns, the real Robert Burns.'"

# The Robert Burns World Federation Conference & AGM 2011

The conference was held this year in the Peebles Hydro. There was a significantly larger turnout than in recent years with over 200 delegates registered.



Peebles Hydro Hotel

The RBANA contingent this year was 15 strong, with the Calgary, Halton Peel, Niagara Falls & Winnipeg Clubs well represented.

The weather was not great, cloudy & cool, but the ambience of the Hotel made that irrelevant and there were times when the view from the hotel was spectacular.

On the Friday evening delegates gathered for dinner in the dining room and enjoyed an outstanding meal, after which they retired to the ballroom for a traditional ceilidh, hosted by John Haining.

The Federation AGM was held in the ballroom on Saturday morning and the announced appointment of Bill Dawson as permanent Editor for the Burns Chronicle was enthusiastically received.

A certificate of appreciation was awarded to Gordon Ashley, a member from Australia, for his efforts in raising awareness of the need for and commitment from the authorities, to restore the vandalized Burns statues in Camperdown, Australia and Bathgate in Scotland.

As always there was lots of opportunity for socializing and greeting members from 'a the 'airts.

The Saturday afternoon sessions were again held in the Hotel Ballroom and were led by Cammy Goodall, and Angus Middleton who engaged delegates with most interesting presentations, then Chris Rollie, followed with an illustrated overview of his book 'Burns in England'.



The formal dinner was held in the evening and followed a Burns Supper style menu. During the dinner the formal appointment of the new executive took place. Jane Brown from the Globe Inn was installed as Junior Vice president by Robert Stewart who in turn was installed as Senior Vice President by Jim Shields. Jim in turn was installed as the new President by retiring President David Baird.



David Baird passes Chain of Offices to new President Jim Shields

Following the ceremonies and dinner

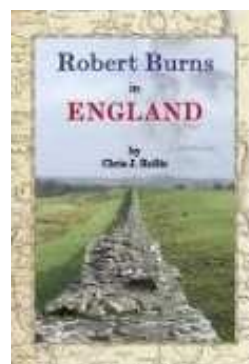
all retired to the Ballroom once more, to dance the evening away.

The band was the same one who entertained so enthusiastically in Aberdeen last year.

The well attended worship service on Sunday Morning was led by Margaret Anderson a lay preacher from Edinburgh.

The a-cappella hymn singing was strong and the new President Jim Shields acted as precentor to start all on key (in the same tune) "auld kirk style".

Following the service attendees took their leave, promising to be at next year's venue, in Harrogate Yorkshire, but for many Williamsburg in April, for the RBANA conference.



# The Forgotten Connections Between Abraham Lincoln and Robert Burns

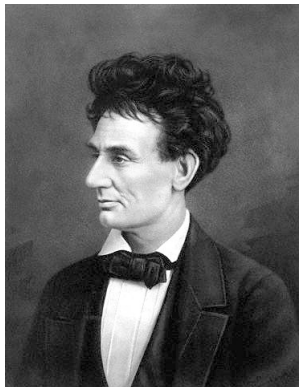
The following article is reprinted from the Gateway Scotland website with the kind permission of [www.Scotland.org](http://www.Scotland.org)

**A**t some time during the mid 1820s, after his pioneer family had crossed the Ohio River from Kentucky to southern Indiana, the teen-aged Lincoln stumbled across a collection of Burns poetry.

It was a thick and chunky volume, he later recalled, bound in leather and printed in very small type. Gifted with a superb memory, Lincoln began to memorize the verses and even tried writing similar poetry himself.

## Getting to know Burns

In 1831, when Lincoln reached his twenty-first year, he moved to New Salem, Illinois, and there he became re-acquainted with Burns poetry through his contact with the Scottish-American Jack Kelso. We know precious little about Kelso. The surname suggests that he originally hailed from the Borders, and some rumours claim that Jack worked as a teacher in Scotland before emigrating from Glasgow to the states; other stories claim that he was born in Kentucky of immigrant parents. Still other maintain that he owned the largest library in New Salem (about 27 volumes, including Shakespeare and Burns). None of these tales can be verified. But there is abundant evidence that Jack Kelso re-introduced young Abraham to Burns verses and Lincoln soon memorized large parts of *Tam O'Shanter*, *Holy Willies Prayer*, *The Cotters Saturday Night*, *Address to the Deil*, *Highland Mary*, *Bonnie Jean*, and *Dr. Hornbook*. A number of his Illinois contemporaries recalled his mastery of Burns poetry. He knew all of Burns by heart, recalled Charles Maltby. Burns seemed to be his favourite, said N. W. Branson. He read, Considerable of Burns poems, recollected Abner Y. Ellis. He later



forsook Byron never Shakespeare and Burns said Joshua Speed. Milton Hay, who served as a clerk in Lincolns Springfield law office once told a reporter that Lincoln could quote Burns by the hour. I have been with him in that little office and heard him recite with the greatest admiration and zest Burns Ballads and quaint things.

## Learning Burns by heart

Lincoln's familiarity with Burns may be further inferred by his hand-written corrections or rather the lack thereof on the pages of his 1860 presidential biography written by William Dean Howells. Just before publication, Howells mailed a copy to Lincoln in Springfield for his final assessment. Lincoln made several changes to the manuscript, but he let stand without comment the following sentence:

**When practicing law before his election to Congress, a copy of Burns was his inseparable companion on the circuit; and this he pursued so constantly, that it is said he now has by heart every line of his favourite poet.**

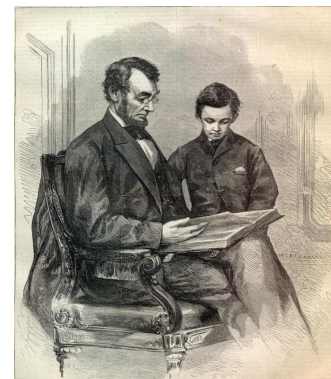
Visitors to the comfortable Lincoln home in Springfield during the 1850s might well be entertained by one of his son's formal recitations of Burns verse.

Whenever a few people were gathered in the White House during an evening, Lincoln would frequently read aloud to them from either Shakespeare or Burns.

## A constant admiration

Lincoln's admiration for Burns never wavered. According to James Grant Wilson, editor of Chicago's first literary magazine and an early Republican supporter, Lincoln once stopped by to see him in 1860. He noticed busts of Shakespeare and Burns in Wilson's office and when

Wilson told him that he had purchased them in Strat-



# The Forgotten Connections Between Abraham Lincoln and Robert Burns

## continued

ford-on-Avon and Ayr, Lincoln was dutifully impressed. Said he:

**They are my two favourite authors, and I must manage to see their birthplaces some day if I can contrive to cross the Atlantic.**

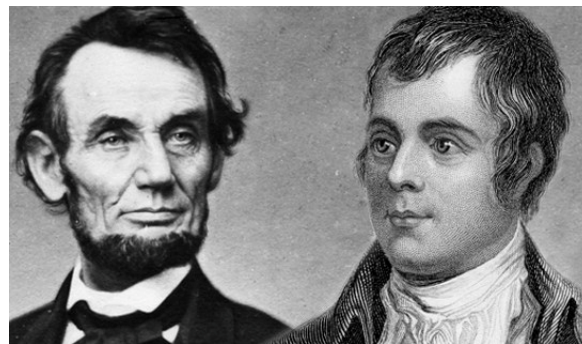
Earlier, when Wilson had written Lincoln to inform him that he has spent an entire day in Prestwick speaking with Burns youngest sister, Isabella Burns Begg, then eighty, Lincoln replied to express his admiration that Wilson had met Burns sister.

In 1859, Lincoln had attended the Springfield Centenary celebration of Burns birthday, and he gave a formal toast to his memory, although exactly what he said has not survived. During Lincoln's years in the White House, the Philadelphia and Washington DC

Scottish-American organizations similarly staged annual celebrations of the poet's birth. In 1864, the Washington club invited Lincoln to join them and while there is persistent rumour that he attended at least one of these gatherings that has never been substantiated. Since Scotsman

Alexander Williamson, who tutored young Tad and Willie Lincoln, also served as Secretary of the Washington club, he had special access to the president. On January 24, 1865, Williamson asked Lincoln for a recognition of the genius of Scotland's bard, by either a toast, a sentiment, or in any other way you may deem proper. (Not precisely an invitation to attend the gathering, as is usually supposed.) Lincoln penned a hasty note that was dutifully read at the celebration. It read:

**I cannot frame a toast to Burns. I can say nothing worthy of his generous heart and transcendent genius. Thinking of what he has said, I cannot say anything worth saying.**



### Leaving nothing further to be said

Lincoln's final reference to Burns came just days before his death. John Hay, Lincoln's secretary, recalled that when he and Lincoln sailed down the Potomac River in early April, 1865, Lincoln recited from several Burns poems. Afterwards, he turned to Hay and remarked that Burns never touched sentiment without carrying it to its ultimate expression and leaving nothing further to be said.

Given this close connection, perhaps it is no accident that Scotland erected the first heroic statue outside of the United States to Lincoln in the Old Calton Hill Burial Ground in Edinburgh (1893). Nor is it an accident that about twelve American cities including New York, Denver, and Cheyenne today house heroic statues to Robert Burns. (It is somewhat rare for a nation to erect a statue to a foreign national who has never set foot on its soil.)

### Lincoln-Burns connection

The U.S. National Park Service has officially recognized the Lincoln-Burns connection. When they refurbished the Lincoln family home in Springfield in 1988, they relied heavily on a woodcut of the family parlour taken from a now-lost original photograph that revealed the presence of several heroic busts in the room. Since it was not possible to determine precisely whom the busts depicted, the Park Service chose three: Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, and Burns. Tucked into the northeast corner of the Lincoln parlour, and one of the first objects that the 400,000 annual tourists to the Lincoln home see, is a heroic bust of Robert Burns. Given Lincoln's heart-felt admiration for the poetry of Scotland's Bard, this is eminently appropriate.



# 2012 Conference Set For Historic Williamsburg

The RBANA Conference Committee which was struck following the Winnipeg Conference has determined that the 2012 Conference will be at the



Williamsburg Hospitality House Hotel held in historic Williamsburg Virginia.

The dates set for the conference are April 27-29 2012.

The date is blossom

time in Virginia, avoids the May holiday weekends and provides comfortable temperatures in the area.

The committee, chaired by RBANA President Chrys Ballantyne, includes most of the members of the 2009 (Mississauga) and 2010 (Detroit) committee; past presidents Jim Cunningham (Conference Con-venor) Jean Cunningham as Secretary and Treasurer Ron Ballantyne.

The conference will begin on Friday night with a "Colonial Dinner." Saturday will, of course, include the AGM, Seminars and the Jim Connor Memorial Quiz and a Burns Supper. There will be a Sunday morning service in a local historic church.

The hotel is located across from The College of William and Mary and is just three blocks from the historic area of Colonial Williamsburg.



The committee have negotiated a reduced rate for the weekend of \$105.00 per night, (single or double) guaranteed 2 days before and after the conference for those who wish to extend their stay.

The full conference registration fees will be finalized in December but the committee indicate that they will be comparable to previous years.

## Did you know...

Burns correctly predicted the fate of the new bridge built by Robert MacAdam in his poem "The Brigs of Ayr". The new bridge was swept away in 1877, but the Auld Brig is still there, proving the prophetic words "...I'll be a brig when ye're a shapeless cairn".



## Required:

Articles of interest for future editions of the RBANA Tattler.

If you come across any news items, which you think may be of interest, or if your club is involved in a project you think RBANA members may be interested in, please let the Editor know.

Please submit to [amansaman@hotmail.ca](mailto:amansaman@hotmail.ca)

Deadlines for submissions to the Winter Edition of the Tattler is December 20, 2011.