



The Tattler

Spring Edition

Words from the President

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- President: Tony Grogan
- Vice President: Robert Boyd
- Secretary/Treasurer: Vacant
- Past President: Chrys Ballantyne
- Canadian Directors: Ron Ballantyne, Jean Cunningham, Alan McKenzie
- U S Directors: Ted Hirtz, Kathleen McGlew, Leslie Strachan
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The Robert Burns Association of North America
Club #1024

Affiliated with the Robert Burns World Federation Ltd

Greetings to all RBANA Members & fellow Burnsians.



Well, according to the calendar it's almost Spring again; according to the television, the calendar is dead wrong! Many of you, especially in the North & East of the continent must be wondering what on earth happened to "Global Warming"! Even here in the Rio Grande Valley in Southern Texas, the temperature was only 2° C, or is this how it is going to affect us??

I hope that many of you are intending to attend the AGM in Columbia, South Carolina, on April 25th. & 26th. Mac Irvin & his team have put together an exciting program which I am sure will set a standard for all future AGMs. We owe Mac a debt of gratitude for taking on the planning and running of this Conference. If you have not already booked, do so now!! This message will be my last as President of RBANA, as my term of office will expire at the AGM. I am confident that you will give my successor the same help & support that you have given me.

The last two years have been eventful for me although I was not able to visit as many clubs as I had hoped, due to personal & family illnesses. Also, our Secretary – Don Rennicks – had to retire for similar reasons. We are really grateful to Ron Ballantyne for filling in.

I also wish to thank the executive committee for their support over my term of office.

I am happy to report that two new clubs have joined RBANA . The South Jersey Celtic Society Burns Club & The St Andrews Society of Tidewater VA. I wish the incoming President and executive every success and look to the members to provide them with continuing support in their endeavors.

If any of you have anything you would like to bring up at the AGM please let Ron Ballantyne know ASAP. I know that among other things, we will be discussing future venues for the AGMs, & storage or disposal of RBANA records among other things. One new idea from the Heather & Thistle Club of Houston, TX, has been to hold their Burns Supper in July to celebrate the death of the Bard.

I think this deserves some consideration as there is historical precedent for this, the first eight Burns Suppers being held to celebrate his death. Also, it would obviate driving in winter conditions such as many of us have had to put up with this year & dare I say, it gives us a chance of celebrating Rabbie TWICE in a year!!

Renate & I look forward to seeing many of you again in Columbia.

Yours in Burns,
Tony Grogan.

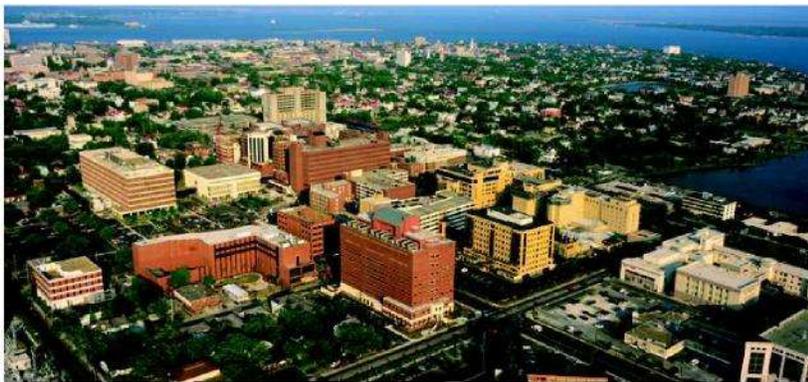
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Columbia Prepares to Welcome RBANA

great turnout is expected when the University of South Carolina, and the city of Columbia play host to the 2014 RBA-NA Conference and AGM.

Mac Irvin reports that over 40 members have so far registered to attend the RBANA conference in Columbia.



The University and Columbia SC from the air

There are plans for a casual reception on Thursday for those arriving that day.

Arrangements are still being made for the golf event, for those who are so inclined.

Mac reports that the University is going all-out for the Friday reception with a display of Burns material; they also have set up a Walter Scott display. "I think attendees will be pleased at this unusual, perhaps one-time, opportunity to see material in the collection," he reports. The reception will be primarily a social gathering with a few words from the Dean and likely greetings from Jane Brown. No formal programme is planned.

The usual Friday evening Ceilidh will be compered by Ronnie O'Byrne and scheduled for 9 p.m. at the hotel. A cash bar will be available.

The Saturday morning AGM is set for the Library conference room, the same location where the Saturday afternoon program will be conducted. This also gives attendees an additional opportunity to view the material on display.



Professor Gerry Carruthers

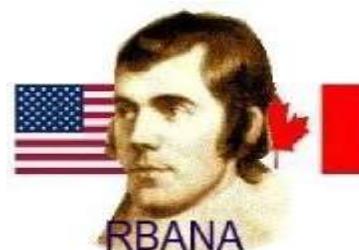
Saturday afternoon will see presentations by Professor Gerry Carruthers of

the University of Glasgow, and representatives of the USC on the Ross Roy Collection. The Burns quiz also is scheduled during that time period.

Saturday evening will see the usual dinner with the installation of the new president and all the customary toasts, with a bottle of white and red wine included at each table. Ronnie has made arrangements with Nils Brown to return again. Federation President Jane Brown has been invited to make the primary address for that evening.

On Sunday morning RBANA Member Debbie Brewin-Wilson, an Episcopal rector from Maryland will lead the worship service. She also is a Celtic/Scottish harpist who will perform throughout the weekend.

Also, the committee would like to remind everyone about the raffle, and ask for members to please contribute items for the draw.



New Board Set to Take Office in Columbia



With the end of the Columbia conference, a new Board will take office for the coming two years. With no more than one nomination for each office, there will be no election. The Tattler presents the following profile of the incoming RBANA Board:

President **Dr. Robert Boyd**



Robert Boyd is a native of Ayrshire, Burns Country, and was educated at the Ayr Academy, and at Glasgow and Warwick Universities. Emigrating to Houston Texas, a quarter of a century ago, he is now in semi-retirement having sold his publishing business in the oil and gas industry two years ago. A life-long Burns enthusiast, Robert joined the Heather & Thistle Society of Houston soon after arriving there. He is a Past Chieftain and has been secretary of its Burns Club for over 20 years. Robert and his wife Irene were the main organizers of the 2008 RBANA conference and he has been a US Director of RBANA since 2008, and Vice President for the past two years

US Director **Les. Strachan**



Born in the heart of Burns Country, in Kilmarnock, Leslie Strachan is no stranger to RBANA members, having been a US Director in the early part of the last decade before returning two years ago. Moving to the United States in 1973, the same year he married Nancy, he has been a frequent speaker and performer at Burns suppers since the early 1980s, as well as spreading the Burns message through the schools and wider community for the past 25 years. Les has also joined the Board of the Burns Federation as US Director, succeeding Mac Irvin. He is an individual member of both the Burns Federation (since 1994) and RBANA (since 1999).

US Director **Ted Hirtz**



Ted Hirtz should also be familiar to long-time RBANA members, the long tall Texan served as a U.S. Director in the last decade, and returned following the Williamsburg conference. A Houston lawyer, he is a Past Chieftain of Houston's Heather & Thistle Club.

US Director **George McClellan**



George G. McClellan 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. A writer, McClellan has a biography on Robert Burns in the editing - publishing process. McClellan 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.

New Board (Continued)

Canadian Director Jean Cunningham



Little need be said about Jean Cunningham, who is known throughout RBANA. Born in Falkirk, Jean emigrated to Canada, with her husband Jim, in 1966. A trained nurse and midwife, Jean retired as Executive Director of the Home Support program in Cambridge Ontario. A founder member of the Robert Burns Society of Doon Jean is also active with the Halton Peel club. She has attended most, if not all RBANA Conferences and has often been called upon to lead the singing of the National Anthems. She has served as Canadian Director on numerous occasions and twice as Secretary Treasurer, under her husband Jim, and for Frank Campbell.

Canadian Director Tony Grace



Tony's interests in things Scottish started during his first trip; to attend the University of St. Andrews. He lived in Scotland for over 8 years and it was there that he met his wife. On emigrating to Canada, he spent most of the next 30 plus years in Fort McMurray in northern Alberta,

where he gravitated toward Scots ex-Pats. His Scottish wife joined the Burns Club there, but due to their constitution allowing no more than one member per family, Tony watched from the sidelines as it were, attending their functions and in particular the annual Burns Suppers, giving him an excellent grounding in Scottish literature generally and the Burns works in particular.

Retiring to Calgary in 2001, he soon joined the Calgary Burns Club as well as the Schiehallion Scottish Cultural Society, serving on the committees of both, with a double term as president of the Burns Club as well as being the current president of Schiehallion. He has been an active member of the Calgary Burns Club Singers who have published two CDs and was part of the group that performed at the Edinburgh Military Tattoo in 2009. He is also a member of the Club's Carnie Group which meets regularly to discuss aspects of Scottish Literature particularly around the times and works of Robert Burns.

Canadian Director Ken Montgomery



Ken Montgomery was born and raised in Edmonton, Alberta with roots back to the Mull of Kintyre in Argyllshire. In 1769 his family immigrated to the British colony of St. John's Island (later renamed Prince Edward Island) and claims that island's famous authoress, Lucy Maud Montgomery (Anne of Green Gables) as a distant

cousin. In 1898 the family then moved to Western Canada. Ken, the oldest of five boys, and the father of three more boys served with the Edmonton Police Service. Retiring as a detective in 2000 he and his wife Brenda then relocated to the smaller city of Medicine Hat, Alberta establishing a court agent and paralegal business. Ken, a longtime attendee to the annual Edmonton Burns Club dinners, when living in Edmonton, has had an interest in Scottish culture and Burns since a wee lad. On arriving in Medicine Hat he was disappointed to learn there was no Burns club, and so, with a few like-minded individuals, took steps to create one. He is a past president and remains involved as the Club's secretary

Past President

Dr. Tony Grogan



A native of Milngavie in East Dumbartonshire, Tony graduated in medicine from Glasgow University, and worked in General Practice in Western Scotland before emigrating to Canada, where he continued his practice, in Winnipeg, and his new hometown of Teulon, and as a Medical Examiner in the Teulon area north

of Winnipeg. Introduced to Robert Burns during school trips to Ayrshire, Tony started annual Burns Suppers in Teulon in 1985 which he continued to organize until 1993. Joining the Winnipeg Robert Burns Club, he served on the Board. A noted raconteur he has appeared at numerous Burns Suppers, in Manitoba, and in Texas, where he has spent the last few winters. He is a Past President of the Manitoba Highland Gathering, has served on Winnipeg's St Andrew's Society Board of Managers for several years, and has recently been elected to the Board of the Scottish Heritage Council of Manitoba.

There remains vacant the positions of Vice President and Secretary/Treasurer, which the new Board shall fill following the AGM.

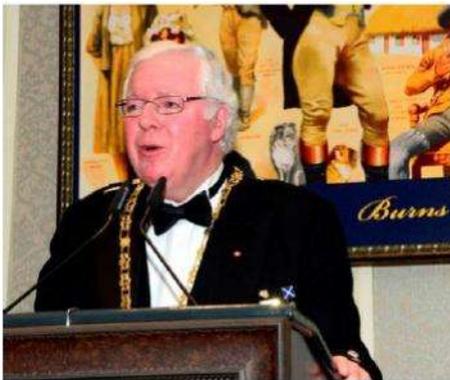
Burns Supper Review

Throughout late January, and even into February, from Sarasota, Florida, to San Diego and Santa Barbara, from Edmonton and Calgary to Halifax, RBANA members and friends gathered to celebrate the bard.

The Burns Suppers ranged from intimate gatherings in homes of members, like Halton Peel, to large gatherings, as many as 820 in Calgary, in hotels, churches or country clubs, even a retirement community, the Westerleigh in Vancouver.

With January 25th falling on Saturday this year, many more of the suppers were held on the day, but some still opted for the Friday before. The Winnipeg club continued its 107-year tradition of hosting the Burns Supper on “the day.”

Many suppers were several course banquets, some just the traditional haggis, neeps and tatties. Santa Barbara hosted a potluck affair, but still with the staple haggis.



RBANA and Federation past presidents travelled from their homes to join the festivities, the furthest was past Federation President Jim Shields (left) who travelled from Scotland to Edmonton to Propose the Immortal

Memory.

Pipers were rampant, at every event; and most had dancers; many had singers, soloists or choral groups, and there were even a few fiddlers.

There was something a little special at each of these events. Halton



The Calgary Burns Club Singers

Peel’s Chrys Ballantyne delighted with a humorous poem about a house maid and a tea cosy;

Schiehallion Society members, in Calgary, joined in a reading of John Barleycorn, with a representative of each table reading one verse. We have not had a report from Toronto this year so can only assume that once again they were one of two clubs, which we are aware of, who paraded in the haggis upon a hod. Winnipeg is the other club that transports its haggis in the regimental style, on a hod made by the late club President Lawrence Cormack who was honoured posthumously. (See story page 6)

According to reports received, most clubs favour the Selkirk Grace (Some hae meat...) while Winnipeg, continues to begin with the Grace Before Dinner (Oh thou who kindly dost provide...) accompanied, later by the companion Grace After Dinner (O thou, in whom we live and move...)

Every Address to the Haggis was, of course, unique, probably none more than in Halton Peel, where, in a break of over 200 years of tradition, it was delivered by a lady, RBANA Director Jean Cunningham. I am sure Rab would have approved.

Each Immortal Memory, the highlight, I'm sure, of every supper, was unique, as well, at least two including music, Edmonton, where James Shields, as is his trademark, included one Burns song, as only Jim can, and in Tidewater, where they were entertained by Glasgow Kiss, what an Immortal Memory that must have been.

And of course every one closed the same way, with unique renderings, in each case, of Auld Lang Syne, and a resolve to do it all again next year.



Jean Addresses The Haggis

Winnipeg Honours "Absent Friends"

The Winnipeg Burns Club, which traditionally begins their annual Burns Supper with a Toast to Absent Friends honoured two during their annual Burns Supper.



board.

The club, whose roster of Honorary Members include a British Diplomat and a former Federation President, from time to time confer the title on their own members, as they did last year, when they honoured two past presidents, who remain active members of the

RBANA President Tony Grogan was in Mercedes,

Texas on January 25th, but had been presented with his certificate by Club President Don Rennicks prior to his departure.

The club also, for the second time in its history presented a posthumous honorary membership, on Lawrence Cormack, who passed away in March. His widow, Joyce, accepted the certificate, on his behalf.

Tony indicated he was completely surprised by the singular honour, but was somewhat disappointed that he was not now entitled to a free lunch.



Think Burns

New Burns Trails Created in Scotland

For those planning a trip to Scotland in the next little while; three new visitor trails have been created to take visitors on a journey to discover more about Robert Burns and his poetry.

They can do this while also enjoying the beautiful landscapes of south-west Scotland which inspired him.

The trails, brought together under the banner of 'Burns and the South West', are the result of a collaboration between Ayrshire & Arran Tourism Team, Dumfries and Galloway Council and VisitScotland. The main aim of the initiative is for locals and visitors to see and experience places in south west Scotland where Robert Burns was born and chose to live.

Maureen McKerrow, owner of the Globe Inn, Dumfries – the Bard's favourite Howff – said: "This is a marvellous guide and gives an excellent link between Ayrshire and Dumfries and Galloway, allowing tourists to follow in the footsteps of Robert Burns.

"It will give people the opportunity to enjoy the beautiful countryside, places and people that made this corner of the world where Burns chose to live."

'Following Burns' is a three-day itinerary that reveals Robert Burns' life through the places he lived

and the people he knew.

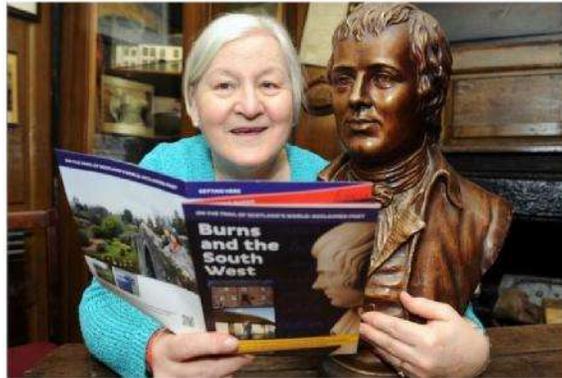
'Naturally Burns' is a two-day trail of light walking in Ayrshire taking you into Burns Country to explore the very land that inspired our poet.

'Actively Burns' is a fun four-day itinerary that includes cycling, walking and horse riding.

A web presence at www.burnssouthwest.com has

been created to complement the trails. There is lots of information about the man himself, his life, his influences and his work. In addition you can find out about events taking place across Ayrshire and Arran which are related to Burns.

These new trails are a superb addition and give our local businesses the opportunity to sell Ayrshire's natural and historical assets relating to Burns giving visitors another reason to explore



Federation President Jane Brown at the Globe Inn launch of three new trails

the region.

Nat Edwards, Director of Robert Burns Birthplace Museum and Vice-Chair of the Ayrshire & Arran Tourism Leadership Group said: "If you really want to get to know Scotland – you could do no better than walking in the footsteps of her national Bard. The landscape, heritage, language and music of Robert Burns' South West has still got as much power to take your breath away as it did in Burns' time and this project is a great chance to introduce it to a whole new generation of visitors."

If Members, or Member Clubs have any story ideas, articles, or event news they would like to share, please contact the editor at amansaman@hotmail.ca

The Tattler is YOUR newsletter!