



# THE VISION

Newsletter of the Robert Burns World Federation



Issue 62 Summer 2023

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## Address to the Deil ~ Robert Burns 1786

O thou! whatever title suit thee,—  
Auld Hornie, Satan, Nick, or Clootie!  
Wha in yon cavern, grim an' sootie,  
Clos'd under hatches,  
Spairges about the brunstane cootie  
To scaud poor wretches!

Hear me, Auld Hangie, for a wee,  
An' let poor damned bodies be;  
I'm sure sma' pleasure it can gie,  
E'en to a deil,  
To skelp an' scaud poor dogs like me,  
An' hear us squeel!

It's always stuck me as particularly brave to name the devil in a variety of rude nicknames, especially when Burns admits that he can be affected by the dark fears of superstition, when the environment suggests that very figure may be roving.

## RBWF Schools Competition Triumph



The Federation National Schools Competition for senior pupils, returned in triumph on Saturday 25th March when Beth Kerr, Schools Convenor, led off proceedings in a well organised and focussed competition with over over 70 participants. Representatives from many Associations and Burns Clubs,

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Overall winners on the day were Dumfries and Galloway, who not only won best overall area showing, but also presented the Federation with the Young Burnsian of the year, Rowan Hastie. She will no doubt excel as a worthy ambassador for the Federation at events.

The standard of entrant was tremendously high and President, Alan Beck, stated, *“I am so very pleased with the effort these young people have exhibited. What a credit they are to Robert Burns and the clubs they represent.”*

The Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Ayrshire, Reverend, Fraser Aitken helped to present the trophies and medals along with, President, Alan Beck, Martin Cassidy, President of Ayrshire Association and Robert Stevenson of the Jean Armour Burns Trust, who sponsored the competition.

All who attended the award presentation in Belmont Academy, Ayr were impressed by the standard reached in recitation, singing and instrumental categories and the many parents attending congratulated the organisers on a day well planned and executed.

In June on Saturday the 10th, in Belmont Academy, the Primary Schools Competition returns and it is anticipated that a large contingent of competitors from across Scotland will compete in these important National Burns Competitions.

## A Week in America = A Year Elsewhere

The South Jersey Celtic Society recently welcomed Federation President Alan Beck, his wife Polly, and Grace and Elliott McKelvie to beautiful Mount Holly, New Jersey. Alan was in town for the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Tartan Day Parade held on April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023 in New York City. During his trip, he, his wife Polly, and Grace & Elliott McKelvie spent three days in Mount Holly hosted by RBANA President Paul Kennedy, SJCS President John Adams and several members.

**Monday** evening Alan and his guests were treated to an evening of great Italian food and opera at the world-famous Victor Café where all the wait staff are trained opera singers. The highlight of the evening was when Polly Beck treated the entire restaurant to a beautiful aria from Handel’s opera *Xerxes* to which she received enthusiastic applause from the restaurant patrons and staff.

**Tuesday**, Paul Kennedy provided a walking tour of Mount Holly and the surrounding area of Smithville Park. While in town the local Ice Cream Parlor opened its doors early to the guests and treated all to home-made ice cream of their choice. In return, the proprietor was treated to a beautiful Mozart duet by Alan and Polly. That evening, SJCS hosted a reception and ceilidh at our local Whisky Lounge. Lots of food, drink, dancing, and music provided by SJCS’s own musicians as well as songs sung by Alan, Polly, Grace and Elliott. Eventually, the fun spilled out onto High Street for more music and whisky (and a few cigars) much to the delight of passers-by.

**Wednesday**, Paul Kennedy and Leo Dungan (Vice President SJCS) arranged for a personal tour of the Rosenbach Museum, known for housing the largest collection of original Burns Manuscripts outside of Scotland. Their guide was Alexander Ames, PhD who provided an overview of the history of the museum, and a catalog of its holdings. Dr. Ames then produced several original *Burns’* manuscripts including *Tam O’Shanter* with the original wording. Between Wednesday and Friday the group were travelling.

**Friday**, Following the Rosenbach Tour, Alan and guests made their way to NYC for additional Tartan Week activities, of marching, greeting, speaking and entertaining.

**Saturday**, The SJCS was to meet up again with Alan and guests in New York City to march in the Tartan Day Parade. The SJCS Pipe Band (*aka Liá Fail Pipes and Drums*) gave a brief concert at Bryant Park where Alan and Polly once again delighted the audience with two Scottish duets before stepping off for the Parade at 2 pm.

**The Future**, SJCS looks forward to making this visit an annual tradition and looks forward to hosting next year’s RBWF president.



## A Wall with a View

The Selection panel charged with choosing an artist to paint a mural on the gable end of the Federation Headquarters in Kilmarnock, met recently to choose from a short list of three candidates drawn from over thirty submissions tendered. The panel made up of art expert, Geraldine Greene, local councillor, Douglas Reid, Elaine Cowan of Celebrate Kilmarnock and Marc Sherland representing the Federation, had the difficult task of interviewing and then choosing the successful artist. Standard of submissions was incredibly high and candidates were asked to provide evidence of successful work elsewhere. Whilst a suitable artist with a great pedigree has been chosen, for contractual reasons the editor cannot reveal who it is at this juncture. However a 'Meet the Artist' event is being planned prior to work commencing and members will be invited to come along and chat over the proposal.



## Poets' Corner & Performance Space



Further to the plans mentioned above, a grant application has been submitted for funding to create a Poets'/Speakers/Performers Corner in front of the mural at the gable end of the Federation HQ. The idea would be to install a platform, seating and flower troughs in a semi circular arrangement to mark out the area as significant. Performances by the local Burns Clubs and as part of the Robert Burns 1st Edition Summer Festival would be part of an ongoing programme of activities which might also include local writing groups and musicians. Highly visible from Bank Street, the Poets' Corner would become a tourist destination with the mural and other activities.

## Robert Burns Association of North America - 2023 Conference

RBANA AGM & Conference was held over May 5 to 7th 2023 at the Delta Hotel in Calgary. Medicine Hat, Patron Jane Brown and RBWF Business Manager, Margaretann Dougall travelled across to Canada with Jean Abdulrahim, immediate past president of Greenock Burns Club to participate, and were met by RBANA President, Paul Kennedy from New Jersey, who supported and attended the 2022 Jolly Beggars Banquet.

The Immortal Memory at the Dinner was delivered by RBANA US Director, Phyl Smith from Sarasota, Florida, who is one of the select members of the RBANA Academy of Speakers. Entertainment also included Les Strachan, the Scots Trio and Jane Brown, with unique offerings from the hosts the Calgary Burns Club. Paul Kennedy in his letter of congratulations wrote *"The AGM itself, from registration, to the Friday Night Supper and Ceilidh with its incredible line-up of talent, to Saturday's Quiz and Lectures, all culminating in the Burn's Supper Saturday night was truly flawless. What an incredible time was had by all. Well done!"*



## Jack Hume Heather & Thistle Trophy

The trophy is awarded for writing poetry in the style of Robert Burns and is presented at the RBANA 8th Annual Poetry Competition 2023. Jack Hume was founder of the Heather & Thistle Burns Club and a staunch supporter. This year the winner was chosen by a three-member panel comprising of Marc Sherland, Past President of RBWF, Willie Gibson; and 2022 Jack Hume Trophy winner Jim McLaughlin from Calgary. 1st Place: "Epistle To My Grandson" by Jim Alexander, Burns Club of Atlanta; 2nd Place: "An Auld Fashioned Poet" by Ronnie O'Byrne; 3rd Place was a three way tie: "When Spring Returns" by Colin Harris; "Luck" by Ashoke Dasgupta; "How Close?" by Ronnie O'Byrne. Congratulations to all entrants.



## Aye Can! so I Can.



Glasgow and District Burns Association is once again putting on its flagship summer school 'Aye Can!' over the 12th and 13th July, for young people aged between 11 and 16. The theme this year will be 'The Jacobites' and the aim is to create an audiovisual piece using Burns' words spoken and sung to explore themes of protest and rebellion. The tutor is planning a morning of songwriting with the young people, exploring issues they feel connected to, then incorporating these messages into a final piece.

Based in a Glasgow Hotel the individual cost per participant is £100 which will include a lunch. Clubs and Associations are invited to nominate young people and also to provide bursary places. The portion using the work of Robert Burns will focus on the theme of the Jacobites, possibly also bringing in more universal works such as 'A

Man's a Man' to steer away from purely nationalist themes and closer to international brotherhood etc. Cit Lennox, the tutor, intends to work for some time with technology, maybe using loop pedals and vocal effects to create sound-scapes, using the words of Burns. She will use her experience of singing, music playing as she is both a fiddler and tenor guitarist, and pulling in visual elements created by her graphic designer, brother. She perceives the outcome as being an immersive theatre piece, but is keen to give the young folk as much ownership over the project as possible. The intention would be for the young people to accompany each other.

At the end of the two days there will be a concert presentation at which the young people would be involved in deciding exactly what is put on, as the presentation on the second day, so this will not be determined until closer to that time. Clubs and individuals sponsoring participants would be invited to this event.

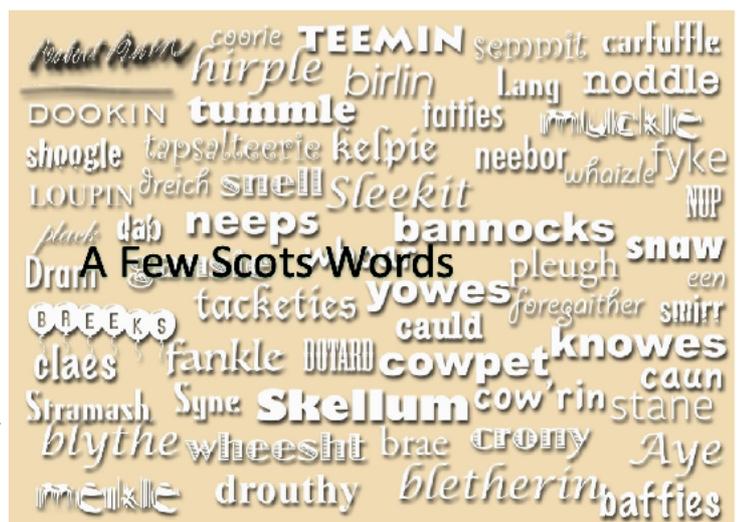
Contact Marc Sherland at [marcsherland@me.com](mailto:marcsherland@me.com) to nominate young people or donate a bursary place. Donations can be made using BACS to : Clydesdale Bank, in the Account of GDBA, Sort Code 82-69-01, Account number 20445886. Please use ref : Aye Can

## Glasgow & District Burns Assoc. - All Packed Up and Ready

Glasgow & District Burns Association has produced a number of education packs, with their purpose being twofold: Firstly to provide the base for teachers to develop lessons involving Robert Burns his life, his poetry, song, and prose. These can be used for broader lessons regarding Burns history, Scots environment and language where Burns interfaces in both the past and future. Secondly they provide a basis for students, during class, or in own time, develop and enhance their knowledge of Burns (older Burnsians wishing to broaden their knowledge may get something from these packs).

There are ten packs together with an Introductory Pack. Each, contains exercises and working together research/discussions. These probably suit P7 and all secondary ages. The packs can be studied in any order, they are not sequential each stands on its own merits.

The packs work best as power point presentations, but can be converted as required. They can be downloaded by contacting the authors: Geoff Depledge: [geoff@geoffdepledge.co.uk](mailto:geoff@geoffdepledge.co.uk) or Marc Sherland: [marcsherland@me.com](mailto:marcsherland@me.com)



## Appeal to Members

?Do you know a company, or individual, willing to support the Federation and its work?

The Federation's mission since 1885 has been to advance public knowledge and education, about the life, poetry and works of Robert Burns.

We need ongoing financial support to carry on with this work.

If you know of a company or individual who might be approached, please contact Margaretann in the office : email: [admin@rbwf.org.uk](mailto:admin@rbwf.org.uk) or telephone 01563 572469

## BOOKS for BURNSIANS from *Studies in Scottish Literature*

- Robert Burns's Life on the Stage, 1842-2022*, by Thomas E. Keith. 2022. Pp. xii + 92. \$18/£15.
- Inventing Scotland's Bard: The British Reception of Robert Burns, 1786-1836*, by Corey E. Andrews. 2022. Pp. xvi + 140. \$18/£15.
- Selected Essays on Robert Burns*, by G. Ross Roy, edited by Patrick Scott, Elizabeth Sudduth, and Jo DuRant. 2018. Pp. xii + 210. \$24/£18.
- The Kilmarnock Burns: A Census*, by Allan Young and Patrick Scott. 2017. Pp. xxxvi + 198. \$24/£18.
- Musick for Allan Ramsay's Collection of 71 Scots Songs, set by Alexander Stuart*, introduced by Kirsteen McCue. 2017. Pp. xxiv + 166. \$24/£18.00.
- Who Wrote the Scots Musical Museum?*, by Murray Pittock. 2016. Pp. iv + 27. \$8/£6.00.
- The Prayer of Holy Willie, by Robert Burns: the Kilmarnock chapbook of 1789*, edited by Patrick Scott. 2015. Pp. 32. \$8/£6.00.
- A Bard Unkend: Selected Poems in the Scottish Dialect*, by Gavin Turnbull, edited by Patrick Scott. 2015. Pp. 46. \$8/£6.00.

These titles, and more, available in paperback only from Amazon.co.UK, Amazon, and other online vendors. Published by *Studies in Scottish Literature* in association with the G. Ross Roy Collection of Robert Burns and Scottish Poetry, University of South Carolina Libraries.

## Obituary

### Frank R. Shaw (1938-2023)

Frank Shaw, who created the web series *Robert Burns Lives!*, died at home in Dawsonville, Georgia, on 21 April, 2023. A member of the Atlanta Burns Club, and a past president of the St Andrews Society of Atlanta, he was also a Burns collector and a gifted speaker for Burns dinners and conferences. With his wife Susan, he was a generous supporter of Burns projects at the University of Glasgow, and of the Ross Roy Collection at the University of South Carolina. For fifteen years, and 250 episodes, Frank's friendship and enthusiasm drew contributions to *Robert Burns Lives!* from well-known Burns scholars, younger students, and unexpected names (eg Alex Salmond).

Sentiment from the Centre for Robert Burns Studies and shared by all in the Federation stated : "Our condolences go across the Atlantic to Frank's wife Susan, son Scott and family. Today we not only lost a dear friend but a great supporter of the Centre and its scholarship. Frank and his family's huge generosity has helped support many younger scholars as well as advancing cutting-edge research in Robert Burns at Glasgow."



## Burns & the Author of 'The Star-Spangled Banner'

University Auctions, in Wilton, CT, recently added big name to Burns's American admirers. A small scrap of paper in the handwriting of Francis Scott Key, author of the U.S. national anthem had an extra stanza for Burns's *John Anderson, My Jo*, Key's addition provided a more upbeat ending, imagining John Anderson and his wife youthful again and happy in Heaven. A later version was included in Key's *Poems* (1857), but Key originally wrote it in 1828, for the album of a North Carolina girl who had married a Mr John Anderson.



## Robert Burns World Federation Conference 2023

Once again the conference returns to the wonderful setting of Dumfries and will be held over the weekend of 8th - 10th September, in the Victorian splendour of the Cairndale Hotel. In addition to the Annual General Meeting, the conference will boast, walks, tours, lectures and sumptuous Dinners.

Last year the setting proved to be a perfect choice for members who enjoyed the community and social opportunities to network, chat over old times and enjoy debate as well as dancing the night away after the first class food served at the Dinners.

The cost is a very reasonable £245 for people sharing a double room and £275 for a single. Attached for your convenience is the booking form. Booking must be completed by June 30th and can be paid by BACS or cheque. Contact [admin@rbwf.org](mailto:admin@rbwf.org) for further details.

Robert Burns World Federation Conference Booking Form: 8th - 10th September 2023 Please complete and return to RBWF office ASAP.

**Cost:** £245.00 per person - Based on 2 people Sharing double/twin room  
 £275.00 per person - Single Occupancy

Price includes: Dinner/Bed and Breakfast on both nights and Day Delegate package\*

**Venue:** Cairndale Hotel  
 132-136 English Street,  
 Dumfries  
 DG1 2DF  
 Tel: +44 (0)1387 254111  
 Email: [info@cairndalehotel.co.uk](mailto:info@cairndalehotel.co.uk)

Please return with deposit to:  
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 Kilmarnock  
 KA1 1HW  
 Tel: +44 (0)1563 572469  
 Email: [admin@rbwf.org.uk](mailto:admin@rbwf.org.uk)



Delegate Name First Name & Last Name	Accommodation required			Attend AGM	*Day Delegate £25	For those not booking the full weekend:			Sunday Morning Worship	Special Dietary needs	Amount enclosed
	Double Room	Twin Room	Single Room			Fri dinner only Non-Res Rate £50	Sat dinner only Non-Res Rate £50	Full Weekend Non-Res Rate £100			

Tour	No. of Spaces				
		Fri (AM)	Fri (PM)	Sat (AM)	Sat (PM)
Walking Tour of Dumfries (inc. Free)					
Annandale Distillery (Supp. To be confirmed)					
Theatre Royal (inc. Free)					

Lecture		
	Fri (PM)	Sat (PM)
TBA		
TBA		

Name.....

Address:.....

Telephone number.....

E-mail address.....

Seating Preferences.....

Special Needs (e.g. Wheelchair access etc).....

**PAYMENT DETAILS:**

- Please make cheques payable to: **The Robert Burns World Federation Ltd**
- Credit/Debit Card payments \* Please call the RBWF office to pay by Debit or Credit Card \*
- Bank Credit to: The Robert Burns World Federation, **Sort Code:** 80-08-53, **A/C No:** 00856523, **Ref:** Surname/Post Code
- Pay by Paypal using [admin@rbwf.org.uk](mailto:admin@rbwf.org.uk) as payee
- A non-refundable deposit of £70 per delegate is requested with the booking.
- Balance to be paid by 30th June 2023
- Failure to provide balance by the due date could mean cancellation of the reservation and loss of deposit.

\*Day Delegate Package (Sat) incs: Tea/Coffee on Arrival, Lunch, Mid-Afternoon Tea/Coffee, Free Sat Tour Options

Dietary Requirements: Delegates must confirm any special dietary requirements when completing the booking form.

**WE RECOMMEND YOU TAKE OUT EVENT INSURANCE IN CASE OF CANCELLATION**  
 \*\*\* PLEASE NOTE ACCOMMODATION TO BE BOOKED DIRECTLY WITH THE ROBERT BURNS WORLD FEDERATION \*\*\*

PLEASE ADVISE OF ANY EXTRA DATES REQUIRED (e.g. Thurs 7th orr Sunday 10th September - £99.50 single occupancy or £129 for double occupancy per night, includes breakfast)

Do you have an article for 'The Vision' ?

Send it with photos to :- [vision@rbwf.org.uk](mailto:vision@rbwf.org.uk)

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**LEGACY DONATIONS**

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## Irvine Post Haste

Irvine Burns Club's Past Presidents, Archie Chalmers and Iain Doole were delighted to welcome Stuart Reid and his family to the Wellwood Burns Centre & Museum on 14th April. Stuart, formerly of Irvine, is a collector of Royal Mail memorabilia and donated an 18th century letter from Patrick Boyle of Shewalton to the Rev George Lawrie of Newmilns, a friend of Robert Burns. It was while staying with Lawrie in the Irvine Valley that Burns wrote the poem, "The Night was Still." which ends with the lines "And ay the o'erword o the spring was:- Irvine's bairns are bonie a'!".

Rev Lawrie sent a copy of Robert Burns' Kilmarnock Edition to Dr Blacklock in Edinburgh who in turn introduced Robert Burns' first edition to Henry Mackenzie who gave it a glowing critique in *The Lounger*, an action that saw Burns heading for Edinburgh and publishing there in April 1787.

An interesting coincidence is that Patrick Boyle's grandson presided over the Burke & Hare Trial and is commemorated by a statue in Castle Street, Irvine, less than a mile from the only statue of Burns in North Ayrshire - the one on Irvine Moor.



*Pictured with Iain Doole and Archie Chalmers are Stuart Reid with his daughters Alison Watts and Janie Armstrong, and granddaughter, Grace.*

## Fleeming's Journal

At Irvine Lasses Burns Club's April Club meeting, held in the Wellwood Burns Centre & Museum, their guests were the President and members of Irvine Burns Club. The speaker was Dr Moira Hansen, an Associate Lecturer in English with the Open University, who talked about her research around the Daybook of Charles Fleeming (pronounced Fleming).

In November 1781, while in Irvine, Robert Burns suffered a period of illness and depression and he was treated by Dr Charles Fleeming. The Daybook was Fleeming's journal of those he treated and their prescriptions. As well as Burns and Irvine townsfolk, Fleeming also treated sailors whose ships had docked at Irvine's busy harbour. The journal was discovered by Irvine pharmacist Charles Balcombe in his attic in 1955 and he subsequently donated it to Irvine Burns Club. Also present at the talk were Margaret & Ross Rae, neighbours of Charles Balcombe, who were present when the Daybook was found. More information on Charles Fleeming can be found at [www.irvineburnsclub.org](http://www.irvineburnsclub.org)

*Pictured are Irvine Burns Club President Angus Middleton, speaker Moira Hansen, Irvine Lasses President Margaret McDougall and, of course, Charles Fleeming's Daybook.*



## Mauchline Holy Fair - 27th May 2023

Cumbernauld & District Burns Club members, plan to visit Mauchline Holy Fair, which is one of the oldest village fairs still running in Scotland. Dating back to at least the 1700s and immortalised in Robert Burns' poem of the same name, it is a community-run event catering to 10,000+ visitors each year. Geared towards the family, no alcohol stalls are permitted, though if anyone wants a drink, the village boasts the famous 'Poosie Nancies' pub made famous in the Jolly Beggars Cantata. There is always plenty to do and see.

The attractions are child friendly, family friendly and it is an inclusive event for folk to come and peruse the stalls, enjoy the funfair and see the bands and other entertainments. For info : [www.mauchlineholylair.com](http://www.mauchlineholylair.com)

## Three Presidents Follow the Star to visit the East



At its recent Lads & Lassies Supper, Seton Burns Club was honoured to welcome 3 RBWF Presidents to Cockenzie & Port Seton Royal British Legion. Past Presidents: Jim Shields (Immortal Memory) and Jane Brown (Toast to the Laddies) were already on the program, but a surprise appearance on the night was current RBWF President, Alan Beck, who also gave us a wonderful song. To see three Presidents this far east is a rare and welcome sight indeed! The photo shows Jim, Jane and Alan with the Seton Committee.

## Burns or Bust

Only two weeks before at the Men's Supper, a new bond of friendship between Seton and New Cumnock Burns Club was born with Bobby Jess, prior to his wonderful Immortal Memory, presenting a gift of a Burns bust to honour our mutual friend and Burns legend, Billy Horne, who was sadly taken from us in October 2021. Both Clubs are looking forward to forming a closer relationship going forward. The photo shows Bobby presenting his gift to Iain McLeod, Chairman, Seton Burns Club.



## Robert Burns 1st Edition Summer Festival



The summer festival based in Kilmarnock at the Federation HQ is in its 3rd season. It was determined by the committee, it was time for a new and catchy title, reflecting its growing demographic, based in Kilmarnock but having contributions from across the Burns world. Indeed Professor Patrick Scott from South Carolina will deliver the keynote lecture, using the zoom platform and it is hoped visiting tourists will engage with and participate in the local performance opportunities.

This year the ambition has grown with the possibility of street stalls and a performance stage nearby, in Old Church Lane. This involves securing a number of planning permissions, so volunteers involved will have their work cut out for them. The full programme will be in the next edition.

Of course the highly successful 'Tak a Cup o' Kindness' Cafe will be returning under the capable management of Lorrie Headley.

Performers who want to tread the boards are asked to make contact with the coordinator Marc Sherland, by emailing a note of their interest to [msherland@rbwf.org.uk](mailto:msherland@rbwf.org.uk)



## From Ayrshire to Otago: the Journey to New Edinburgh

On 10 April 1796 another Burns was born in Mossgiel farm that had formerly been the shared home of Robert Burns and his younger brother Gilbert. By that time their partnership had ended and Robert was in his final months working as an exciseman at Dumfries and soon to pass away. There was time, however, for him to meet his new nephew, Thomas Burns, and according to family legend he is thought to have done so. Thomas was the third son of Gilbert and his wife Jean Breckenridge and destined to play a leading role in the Scottish colony of Otago in the South Island of New Zealand. The name “Mossgiel” would also travel to Otago with the Burns family, applied in the truncated form “Mosgiel” to a property around which a satellite township to Dunedin would develop in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

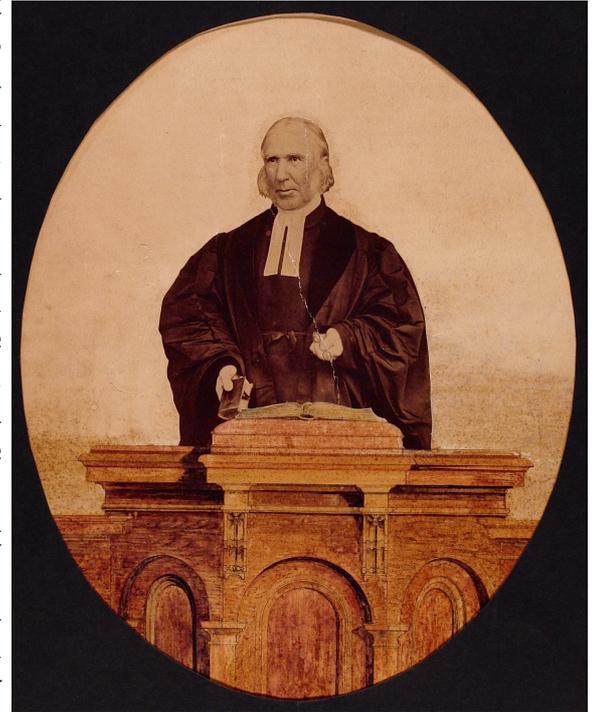
It was connections such as these that were the focus of a recent filming expedition by a team at Toitū Otago Settlers Museum, the social history museum of Dunedin, for a documentary called *Journey to New Edinburgh*. The film examines the British origins of the scheme to establish a Scottish Presbyterian colony in faraway New Zealand, a project that grew out of the excitement of the Disruption and the establishment of the Free Church in 1843. “New Edinburgh”, or Otago as it was eventually renamed, envisaged a colony peopled by Free Church families and imbued with the values of Free Church Presbyterianism. Thomas Burns, by then a middle-aged minister and one of the founders of the Free Church, played a pivotal role as spiritual leader of the settlers.

Thomas was a very different character than his famous uncle. A staunch Calvinist, he was not inclined to poetic expression, as his rather dry sermons and surviving diary attest. The latter provides an invaluable record of the pioneers’ journey to New Zealand and their first years breaking in the land and establishing Dunedin. Rich with detail on drainage, crops, and construction, it offers precious little by way of reflection on the deeper meaning of it all. Thomas Burns’s rigorous recording of Dunedin’s weather –

readings taken several times every day and fastidiously entered into a meteorological diary – and his “Visitation Book” documenting the pioneer population house by house, likewise provide treasured accounts of the minutiae of early settler life in Otago; all reason, no rhyme.

The Burns family nonetheless brought a deep pride in their famous relation with them to Otago. Thomas’s son Arthur played a leading role in the movement to erect a statue of The Bard in the heart of Dunedin in the 1880s. Unveiled in May 1887, the Dunedin statue was the last in a sequence of four sculpted in bronze by Sir John Steell, the others in New York, London and Dundee. At its launch Arthur Burns made an impassioned defence of his great-uncle’s reputation, though many have since noted the fitting orientation of the statue – his back to a church and facing the bars of Dunedin’s lower Octagon. The furthest statue of the Bard from Ayrshire, it is also the only one outside of Scotland that takes pride of place in the very centre of a city.

These and other links between Otago and Scotland can be explored in *Journey to New Edinburgh*, available via Toitū’s website: <http://www.toituosm.com/whats-on/watch>



## RBWF Lecture Series

### Justice or injustice - The real William Fisher & Holy Willie's Prayer



Image from an SCWS cigarette card 1924

The Federation Lecture series continues with a Lecture by Jim Thomson on 29th June at 7:30pm titled **Justice or injustice** - The real William Fisher and Holy Willie's Prayer. Jim Thomson, Past President of the Federation will deliver a talk on the historical figure of William Fisher and his life as researched and compare this with the character portrayed by Robert Burns in poetry. Eventbrite link <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/justice-or-injustice-the-real-william-fisher-holy-willies-prayer-tickets-637131035077>

In July, on the 27th, we are fortunate to have Patrick Scott, editor of *Studies in Scottish Literature*, who will deliver as part of the Robert Burns 1st Edition Summer Festival, **The Man who Printed Burns's First Book: John Wilson of Kilmarnock and the Book World of 18th Ayrshire** - Summary: Burns's first book, *Poems Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* (1786) was printed just yards away from the RBWF headquarters. John Wilson, the young Kilmarnock bookseller who printed it, knew the Ayrshire readers Burns wrote for, and Wilson's story illuminates Burns's life and achievement.

Speaker: Patrick Scott, editor of *Studies in Scottish Literature*, retired from the University of South Carolina. His books include *Robert Burns: A Documentary Volume* (2018) and *The Kilmarnock Burns: A Census*, with Allan Young (2017). He is a member of the Burns Club of Atlanta and a regular contributor to the *Burns Chronicle*.

Book through eventbrite for a small donation, <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-man-who-printed-burnss-first-book-prof-patrick-scott-tickets-637144916597>

**Do you have a talk, senior of lecture** which you would like to deliver. Get in touch to talk over the possibilities with Marc Sherland at [vision@rbwf.org.uk](mailto:vision@rbwf.org.uk)

### Robert Burns Birthplace Museum - Free Highlight Talks

The excellent and free Highlight Talks continue at the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum, Alloway.

Talks begin on a Wednesday at 2.30pm and finish at 3.30pm. Advance booking, for free, on Eventbrite is advised as numbers have been growing. Any unreserved seats are allocated on a first come first served basis on the day.

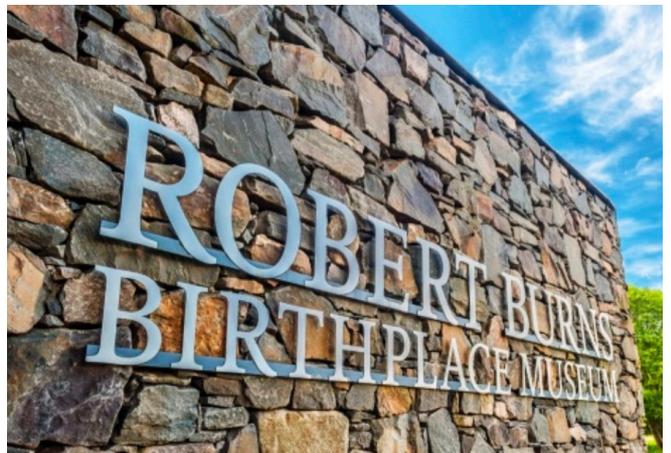
**On Wednesday 31 May, 2023** - Dr Ian Fraser, Archive Manager, Historic Environment Scotland, presents **The Lost Tomb of Robert the Bruce** considering the

research and reconstruction of the warrior King's tomb, envisaged and reimagined as the last resting place of the corporeal remains of the Scots monarch featured in a famous work by Robert Burns.

**On Wednesday 14 June 2023** - Speakers from The Whithorn Trust explore **The Whithorn Way: The History, Regeneration And Return Of A Pilgrim's Way**. The signposted (blue signs) route of the Whithorn Way passes near the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum on its way through Alloway.

**On Wednesday 28 June 2023**, John Burnett, retired Principal Curator of Modern Scotland, National Museums of Scotland, author of several books on Scottish history and folklore including *Robert Burns And The Hellish Legions* presents – **Halloween: a Great Poem Rediscovered** – examining the worth and significance of a work by Robert Burns.

**These talks will take place at 2.30 pm in the Robertson Room unless otherwise notified.**



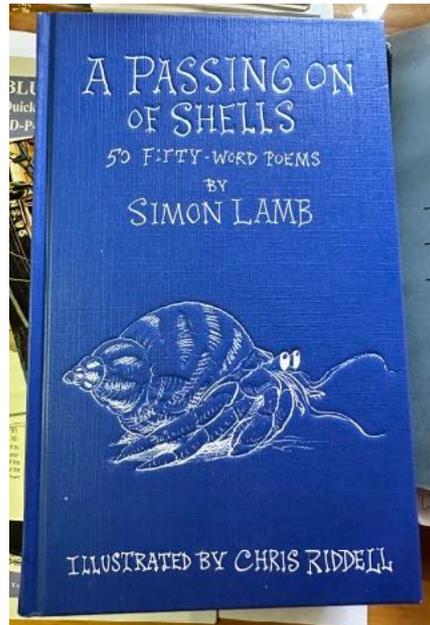
## A Passing on of Shells :

ISBN 978-1-915252-12-8

Printed by Scallywag Press Ltd

I like a book that, from its cover to its contents, adds to the overall tactile and reading experience and this book does exactly that. It's a perfectly bound hardback book around A5 in size with an incised image of a hermit crab perambulating across its surface.

Simon Lamb is a poet, performer and Storyteller and recently appointed writer



in residence at the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum. This anthology titled "A Passing on of Shells" is a joy to read with poems of only fifty words apiece and full of wit and wonder.

This is Simon's debut poetry collection, with lovely and apt illustrations by Chris Riddell, which add to the cumulative heartwarming experience.

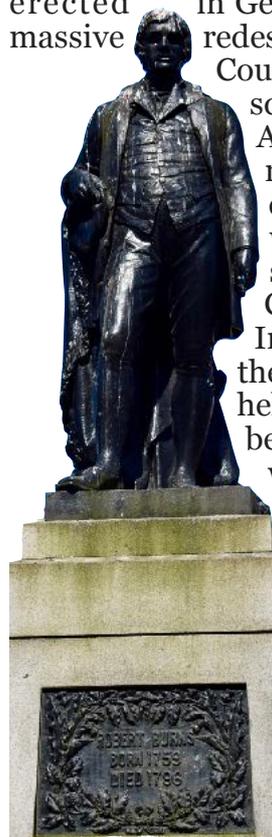
The poetry is pert and perfect, from the calligraphic 'Golden Retrieval' to the eponymous 'Life on the Rock' from which text the title and image derive. Children of all ages from five to seventy-five are bound to find poems to engage and explore. It is in my opinion a triumph. and has from the BookTrust a worthy accolade "The perfect poetry package!" I couldn't agree more.

PS Simon hopes to provide a writing workshop as part of the Robert Burns 1st Edition Summer Festival in late July.



## All Change in George Square, Glasgow

The Glasgow & District Burns Association were concerned when they learned the statue of Robert Burns erected in George Square Glasgow, by public subscription in 1882, is to be taken down as part of a massive redesign of the public plaza. Armed with a letter of concern they approached the City Council to ask what safeguards they might receive that the statue would be returned to the square when the work was completed. Fortunately David Vennard, President of the Association, met with the architect and team, at a meet the planners exhibition. He was reassured, upon seeing the exciting layout of the square, which will feature the re-sited statues in a garden setting at the City Chambers end of the plaza. Indeed the repositioning will suit the annual floral tribute ceremony held each January, better as it will be closer to the entrance. The work will however mean that the statues will be in storage for about 18 months when the work begins. As David said "It is a price to pay for these exciting plans to be realised and as long as it preserves and enhances the positioning of the statue, we will not stand in the way."



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