



IRVINE BURNS CLUB

2014

“Another year has gone for ever”

(“New Year’s Day”, Collected Works p.346)

Rev Robert Travers, of Irvine Old Parish Church, is the latest incumbent of that ministry to serve as our President, reflecting his interest in the well-being of Irvine Burns Club over many years. Four previous ministers served as President – James Somerville (1884), Henry Ranken (1895), Alec Macara (1939), and Jim Greig (1992). These five, in an unbroken line, span over 150 years of ministry in Irvine.

Vice-President Derek Murdoch, fresh from relinquishing his chain of office as Deacon Convener of the Irvine Incorporated Trades, is preparing for his role as Croupier at our Dinner.



Honorary Members

Four eminent individuals accepted honorary membership in 2014. Anne Gaw, who was organising committee secretary for the World Federation Conference in Irvine in 1981, served as World President in 1988-89, and later as Schools Convener for ten years. In Irvine, she helped to found the Lassies Burns Club in 1975. Her gracious acceptance ensures that all four World Presidents from Irvine are in our honorary ranks, as she joins Alex Macmillan (1975), Sam Gaw (1989) and John Inglis (1997).

We also welcomed acceptances from Prof. David Purdie, Editor-in-Chief of the Burns Encyclopaedia 4th ed., Prof. Nigel Leask, writer and editor in the Burns field, and the Irvine-born Rev Lorna Hood, Moderator of the General Assembly 2013-14.

Robert Burns World Federation Conference

Irvine Burns Club was delighted to be able to assist in this year’s Robert Burns World Federation Conference in September. When we last assisted, in 1981, the Conference was a success and this year’s proved no less successful. Led by Past President Bill Nolan, but with the help of many Directors, our Club contributed ideas, a working session, and access to ‘Wellwood’ – all resulting in a memorable visit for many Scots and our visitors from abroad. North Ayrshire Council ensured that the Greenwood Academy hall was transformed into a top-class venue for the Conference Dinner.



Schools Programme

School involvement continues apace. In January, in the ninth year of the current programme of visits, we welcomed our 5,000th primary visitor, Rachel Millar (pictured), of Annick Primary, one of 15 schools which sent classes. Also, some of our Past Presidents have visited primary schools to help pupils with a poetry recording project. Add to these major items the ongoing contribution of primary schools to our Harbourside project, the annual verse-speaking competition, with seven schools participating, in mid-March, and primary visits to the first stage of the WWI ‘Forever 19’ exhibition, and you will realise that the co-operation now established between the Club and North Ayrshire Council is producing impressive results.



Harbourside Heritage Project



The Heritage Lottery supported project – supported also by North Ayrshire Council, Irvine Bay, and a large number of other organisations and businesses – has progressed further. Designs for information boards are about to be confirmed. Scots words for the public to spot and enjoy should be ready by early 2015, and the amount of information on the website, pictorial and video as well as



textual, has increased considerably, and continues to do so – a significant addition to Irvine heritage, prompted by Capt Richard Brown's friendship with Robert Burns. The two photos here show (left) a coal ship in the early 1950s, with cranes and a John Kerr lorry, and (right) the tug 'George Brown' helping sailing ships to sea. Visit www.irvineharbourside.org

Twa-three jottings

The five Music Club evenings, in the comfort of our Music Room, organised by Director Robin Whyte, presented a wealth of talent from February to November.

Our 200 Club paid out its big prizes at the Annual Celebration and £25 cheques in later months. Forms for supporting us in this way will be on the tables at the Annual Celebration.

At 'Wellwood', many of the artefacts which were stored away during refurbishment are now back on display. You'll find many items of interest in the new exhibition cases upstairs.

'Wellwood' hosted the launch of the North Ayrshire WWI exhibition 'Forever 19', the central attraction being the VC of Ross Tollerton and features on him and on Harry Ranken, VC.

Town centre publicity



Irvine Burns Club was pleased to be able to help with ideas and images to brighten up the town centre hoardings – a whole year of 'advertising'!



Wellwood Collection

The Wellwood Collection soon to appear on the website is our library catalogue of about 1,500 items. Researchers among you would like to be able to browse the list of what we hold. We hope to offer access to the online catalogue by mid-2015. You will then be able to decide what you wish to consult, then call in during normal opening hours.

The Wits Dinner

Organised in conjunction with Action Medical Research as a fund-raiser to benefit both organisations equally, this year's Dinner was sponsored by Booth Welsh and GSK and enjoyed increased attendance. Speakers were Tom Paterson and Bert Thomson (Len Murray being unwell), and entertainment was provided by Jocelyn Skaaning and Kerry Adam with pianist James O'Neil.

Annual Celebration

There will be a few changes in format for the 2015 Dinner – see if you spot them during the evening. The first is a slightly later starting time to suit more members – 6:30 for a 7:00 pm start. The ticket form is being sent out along with this newsletter.

How to contact us

post: 'Wellwood', 28 Eglinton St., Irvine, KA12 8AS

email: info@irvineburnsclub.org

We are currently checking the membership lists. If you hear of any member not receiving this letter, please let us know. Also make sure we have your up-to-date postal address and your email address.

website: www.irvineburnsclub.org