



Irvine Burns Club - What do you see?

Young Visitor Sheet – C – the Clement Wilson Room

**** PLEASE STAND AT LEAST 3 FEET (1 METRE) AWAY FROM THE MURALS ****

1. Find the girl in white. Robert Burns wrote afterwards – “she sung sweetly, and ‘twas her favourite reel to which I attempted giving an embodied vehicle in rhyme” – meaning that she sang so sweetly that he wrote a poem for her.

Robert was 15. The two teenagers are chatting during a break from the work of harvesting. Look for her name and write it down.

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2. Look at the scene above. The words “the town is agog with the ploughman poet” (‘agog’ means ‘excited’) were written by Mrs Alison Cockburn (aged 74 at the time).

(a) Do you think the lady is Mrs Cockburn? ...

Yes/No because

(b) Most people called him a “ploughman poet” instead of perhaps the “Ayrshire poet”? Why do you think they mentioned his farm work?

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3. Look at the scene of Burns creating the poem “Tam O’Shanter”.

(a) He is excited. Read the comment below the painting, and write down the last five words:

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(b) What sort of poem does Burns think he is making up? – one that is funny or sad or scary or what?

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4. Look now at the bottom right. Who is the man and what is he doing?

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5. Look up at the man playing the fiddle. Apart from his smile, find something that shows he is really enjoying himself.

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6. Above the man, you will see the name of the publication which printed over 177 of Burns songs, as well as many he had collected. Write down the name of the publication.

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7. Look at where the poems are being printed. The printer's assistant is holding something with black stuff on it. What is the black stuff?

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8. If you have time left over, go to the letters from famous people and choose any three you have heard of.

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