



MEDICINE HAT BURNS CLUB

2020 FALL NEWSLETTER



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



First, looking at my photo, you can see one thing I did do during the summer, and never being a member of the Royal Navy, it was quite a challenge.

I had hoped that when this Fall newsletter was published it would include some positive news with regard to forthcoming events! We are all no doubt aware, this is just a pipe-dream due to the COVID 19 situation and like most clubs all over the world are confined to virtual gatherings. As a result of our last online meeting, Secretary Ken put out a consensus, questioning the St. Andrews Dinner and our 2021 Burns Supper. As below, Ken has reported the final decision of the Executive.

It is also strange that I am writing this piece, as my tenure as Club President should have ceased during our JBB, planned for early October. I have discussed the situation with VP & President Elect Andy Cowan and we think we have a solution for a way ahead during these circumstances. More on that later!

Although the Burns fraternity are not physically meeting (across the world), it is heartening to see the efforts being made by individuals and clubs to keep the spirit of Burns alive. In doing so they are also giving those that find themselves isolated an

opportunity to interact, in what will be an extremely lonely period for many. Our Club Patron, Jane Brown, continues to publish a daily Burns verse on FB with a link to the times in which we find ourselves. Club Member and RBANA President Henry Cairney has been regularly chairing meetings of the RBANA executive and will be chairing a ZOOM meeting for all RBANA members within the next few months.

The New Cumnock Burns Club across the pond has introduced Youtube videos of discussions with Burns enthusiasts all over the world, so that we can all catch a glimpse of their 'Life with Robert Burns'. The RBWF has also taken an active part in 'TAMFEST', Ayr's Tam O' Shanter Festival, with many activities online for Burnsians. Henry Cairney has a further piece on this within the Newsletter. Numerous other initiatives are in place online and I urge you all to catch a few of these and engage with other users. A message/text or phone call is what a lot of us need during these crazy times in which we find ourselves.

Since our last meeting, I have kept myself busy (and relatively fit) with a solo tour of SW Ontario (in the main due to my Scotland trip cancellation). On bike and with tent attached I managed to cover some 1700kms, raising \$1500 for charity in the process. A big thank you to all that donated to the "fight against kids' cancer" and also to Club Member Mathew Hill, who was pedalling for the same cause during August.

Sitting here writing this on Thanksgiving, I will close with a 'hale & hearty' wish that you have all enjoyed the long weekend and that we see better times together on the horizon. All the very best!

Andy Harrower

MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY



Greetings to everyone. We are still in changing times and are now facing Stage Two of COVID. Lives, employment and lifestyles have and continue to be negatively affected, and many clubs and societies are struggling to survive as the lack of contact and socialization has and continues to affect participation and involvement. This situation has also caused many to have a new understanding of the word 'ZOOM'.

That being said, and with the current circumstances being what they are, the Executive has decided that the health and welfare of our members and guests must come first, thus the Club will not attempt to organize or host a 2020 St. Andrew's dinner, and where the 2020 Jolly Beggars has already been cancelled, the 2021 Annual Burns Dinner is now also officially cancelled.

The Executive however do acknowledge we must make efforts to crack on, so in honour of St. Andrew's Day, there will be a Club meeting for all members that will be conducted by ZOOM at 1800 hours, Monday, 30 November 2020. Details on how to connect, etc will be emailed to all members in due course. Hang in there and stay safe!

Kex Montgomery

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT ELECT



It is an honour to be acclaimed as our next President, and I look forward to serving the Club and our membership during my tenure, which will commence when we return to a better sense of normality.

I believe that the next year or two will definitely be a huge challenge for all those involved in the Club, especially in organizing events, now with certain restrictions. I think that the last two verses of "To a Mouse" (my favourite Burns poem) can really sum up this year and maybe next year as well.

*'But Mousie, thou art no thy-lane,
In proving foresight may be vain:
The best laid schemes o' Mice an' Men
Gang aft agley,
An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,
For promis'd joy!*

*Still, thou art blest, compar'd wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:
But Och! I backward cast my e'e,
On prospects drear!
An' forward tho' I canna see,
I guess an' fear!*

I hope and trust we will continue to all work together and stay dedicated in keeping and promoting Robert Burns and Scotland's culture and traditions in Medicine Hat, and I look forward to working with all of you to achieve that goal.

All the best and take care.

Andy Cowan

SPECIAL CONGRATULATIONS TO ANDY HARROWER



Submitted by Henry Cairney

The Tam Fest 'Tam O' Shanter' poem oration competition was held on Saturday 10th October and was hosted by the newly installed RBWF President Marc Sherland. There were 5 very strong competitors who took part from both North America and the UK. The judges who were Polly Beck, Jackie Higgins and Henry Cairney had an extremely

hard task in picking a winner, but they chose Andy Harrower from the Medicine Hat BC as the overall winner, with David Brown from Greenock BC a very close second. Andy will receive a Certificate as the winner. The photo shown depicts Andy doing his virtual recitation of 'Tam O' Shanter'.

Congratulations Andy you did the Club and RBANA proud!

TO SEE THE RECORDED COMPETITION GO TO

<http://www.rbwf.org.uk/tamfest-2020-the-rbwf/>

(link to the video via the word 'competition' in para. 3)

UPDATE ON CLUB MEMBER PETE INNES



As reported earlier, Pete is dealing with cancer. He recently reported on his FB page that radiation treatment was burning on his neck and it was very painful when swallowing. However, he did say his sense of taste was returning and he was starting to eat solid food again, but in small amounts, and noted he had lost over 40 lbs in muscle. At this time he is sleeping lots and doing very little. Finally Pete advises he is feeling better each day and wants to thank each and every one of those who have provided support and positive vibes. Our thoughts remain with Pete and his family and we trust he will beat this challenge.

SOME ROBERT BURNS TRIVIA

1. Robert Burns referred to himself as 'Spunkie'. In a letter of 1793, Burns took 'Spunkie' as his 'signature' and 'symbol' – and a surprising fact is that he never referred to himself as either Rabbie or Robbie Burns, even though he is often called 'Robbie Burns' or 'Rabbie Burns' by others. He also called himself many names in his correspondence, from Rab and Rob, and one personal favourite, 'Rantin Rovin Robin'.
2. His work inspired the titles of several classic twentieth-century American novels. Both John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* (1937) and J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) owe their titles to Robert Burns's poetry.
3. Burns didn't write all the words to 'Auld Lang Syne'. The popular song, whose title means 'old long since' or 'a long time ago', was a traditional song which Burns wrote down in an effort to preserve the Scots oral tradition and culture. Burns himself described 'Auld Lang Syne' as 'an old song, of the olden times, and which has never been in print, nor even in manuscript until I took it down from an old man's singing.'

4. His poem 'A Red, Red Rose' was Bob Dylan's biggest source of creative inspiration. Bob Dylan – the singer-songwriter who took his stage surname from the poet Dylan Thomas – has named Burns's love lyric 'A Red, Red Rose' as his chief poetic inspiration. This song, too, was reportedly based on a number of traditional, oral lyrics.

5. The first Burns Night was held on the anniversary of Burns's death, rather than his birth. In 1801, friends of Robert Burns gathered to celebrate the poet on the five-year anniversary of his death, on 21 July. A year later, in January 1802, the oldest surviving Burns club (in Greenock) gathered to celebrate Burns on the anniversary of his birth – or at least, what they thought was his birth. However, they got their facts wrong, and thought Burns was born on 29 January instead of 25 January, so held their celebration on the 'wrong' date.

NEW MEANING FOR WTF 'Wear The Facemask'

