

# THE JOURNAL



## OF THE ST. ANDREW'S SOCIETY OF MONTREAL

May 2011

### Upcoming Events

**Fraser Highlanders  
"Under the Stars" Dinner**  
The Fort, Ile Ste-Hélène  
Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2011



**Summer BBQ & St Ambroise Terrace**  
5080 St. Ambroise Street  
Tuesday, 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2011

#### Celtic Festival

Pierrefonds High School  
Saturday, 30<sup>th</sup> July, 2011



**Montreal Highland Games**  
Pierrefonds High School  
Sunday, 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2011



**Meeting of Council & Committee of  
Management**  
Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> August, 2011

#### Taste of Scotland's Fine Foods and Malt Whisky

Black Watch Officers' Mess  
Friday, 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2011



#### St. Andrew's Ball

Chateau Champlain Hotel  
Friday, 25<sup>th</sup> November, 2011



2011 Montreal's St. Patrick's Parade. As you see, members of the St. Andrew's Society participated in the parade; without traditionally rainy weather!

## President's Report May 2011

May 9th was a special day in my life when Justice Kenneth C. Mackay placed the 1835 chain of Office of the President of the St. Andrew's Society of Montreal around my neck. It was like the day I took occupancy of the Commanding Officer's office in the Black Watch Armoury, where I was surrounded by the photographs of 140 years of my predecessors. It was time to step up to the challenge and be part of the writing of history, even if for a very short time relative to longstanding histories. My involvement with the St. Andrew's Society goes back some 50 years, when on my 10th birthday I was paraded by my mother to the Armoury to start learning bagpipes, in a program sponsored by the Society. I participated in my first St. Andrew's Ball as a young cadet piper in 1963, and have grown up with such Society notables as David M. Stewart, Colonel J. R. Harper and Justice K. C. Mackay as my mentors. To wear the chain of office of President is a daunting challenge, which I look forward to.

I would be remiss if I did not publicly thank Peter McAuslan and his wife Ellen for the outstanding job they did for two years and longer in maintaining, upholding and building on the Society's objectives and traditions. Working with Peter McAuslan and Ellen was always fun and productive. Peter's casual and polite way of getting his points across, always translated into concrete action and accomplishment. His beer may have helped along the way, and Ellen may have had to pick up after Peter, but as a couple they were a dynamic duo. On behalf of all members of the Society, I take great pleasure in thanking Peter and Ellen for their contribution, and look forward to calling on their kind auspices as the Society moves ahead.

My term as president will focus on continuing the various actions already "in the works" - to some extent "picking up the pieces" after Peter's creativity. We have discussed a Scottish Studies Program with one of our two downtown universities. It is time to have a new look at the finances of the St. Andrew's Ball. Action must be taken for membership growth and renewal. Coming from a military background I believe in the KISS principle of Keeping it Simple. There are some areas in our operations which could benefit from this advice. Luckily, we have outstanding committees composed of very hardworking and dedicated members but we will always need to find new volunteers.

Of course being a President has one purpose - to serve one's constituency. I seek your support, in whatever form it takes, to ensure the future of the St. Andrew's Society of Montreal. I am sure our 176 years of predecessors would be proud and somewhat amazed at what the Society continues to do today. Let's continue to amaze and surprise them together!

Bruce Bolton

### **2011 St Andrew's Society Burns Dinner**

S. Diamond

This annual Burns Dinner of the St Andrew's Society was held this year at the University club of Montreal. It has become a time-honoured tradition to pay homage to the "Immortal Bard" by gathering at his eponymous dinner and enjoying good food, drink and entertainment. This year's event lived up to its name.

The evening began with Private Alexandre Leger, a piper with the Black Watch (RHR) of Canada pipes and drums, marching in the head table to the rousing tune of Caber Feidh. After introductory words by Scot Diamond, the chair of the event's organizing committee, the evening continued with the traditional procession of the Haggis Party. This was done, as always, to the pipe tune of "A Man's a Man" which is taken from a Burns poem of the same name. (It is, incidentally, the traditional tune played for defaulter's parade in many Scottish regiments. I will abstain from drawing several very logical conclusions at this juncture).

Delivering the address this year was Jeff McCarthy, who added a bit of his flair and personality to the speech, all of which proved to be very entertaining. Rarely is a "wee beastie" stabbed

with such gusto.

Chef Alain Monod again this year led us on an exciting adventure in Scottish cuisine. Here is the menu to which the guests were treated:

- Arbroath Style Smokies Salad: salad featuring smoked haddock in the style of the specialty of the town of Arbroath in Angus.
- Auld Reekie Cock-a-Leekie soup: a traditional Scottish soup dish of leeks and chicken stock. The "Auld Reekie" does not refer to the soup being "smokey" but to the origins of the recipe in Edinburgh which used to be called Auld Reekie in the days of coal fires.
- Haggis (wi' a' the honours): the national dish of Scotland, a traditional Scottish sausage or savoury pudding cooked in a casing of sheep's intestine, piped in with suitable ceremony.
- Neeps 'n tatties: turnips and potatoes.
- Bubblyjock Stovie: Bubblyjock is turkey. Stovie is what is prepared with all that delicious meat, vegetables, fat and gravy, left over on the stove from the Sunday roast.
- Clapshot: traditional dish originating in the Orkneys consisting of turnips, potatoes and

chives.

- Green Peas and Carrots.
- Cranachan and Raspberries: a traditional Scottish dessert usually made, in more modern times, from a mixture of whipped cream, whisky, honey, and fresh raspberries topped with toasted oatmeal.
- Coffee, Tea and Scottish Shortbread.

Chef Monod has been researching and preparing traditional Scottish recipes for the Society's Burns Nicht Suppers for five years now. In recognition for his enthusiasm, energy and excellent service to the Society and the greater Montreal Scottish community in so doing and in cooking the meals for St-Andrew's Balls past during his days as head chef at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel, Chef Monod was presented with an award for Scottish Cuisine at the Quebec Thistle Council Awards dinner held on April 2, 2011. We congratulate Chef Monod and again thank him for his contribution to our events.

The most important part of the dinner was, of course, the speeches. Brent Cowan proceeded to the podium in great style, sporting a pair of Fraser trews. His toast to the Immortal Bard was a

thoughtful and detailed reflection upon the life of a man who, in his short years, added a rich texture of both philosophy and humour to Scottish culture. As Mr Cowan himself pointed out quite ably on numerous occasions, though, Burns' contribution was not only to his contemporaries or to the Scots but also to the world – and history – as a whole.

The reflective and intelligent tone that Mr Cowan's speech left in the room was quickly and violently shattered by the individual who delivered "Toast to the lassies." As I was honoured to deliver this speech myself, I should refrain from commenting upon it – it is reproduced in the adjoining section, so you are free to pass whichever judgment is most fitting. I will say, for my part, that it was characteristically excellent and not likely to be rivalled in quality or style. Or so I had hoped.

But then the evening was closed with the poised, lovely and decidedly less sensationalist words of Susan Stevenson, who was attending her second Burns Dinner. Her speech certainly proved to be a lovely ending to a night that is meant to celebrate an individual who was at once intelligent and intellectual, funny and sensationalist, poised and tactful.

As always, sponsors have donated door prizes. For this we would like to thank Curry House, McKibbin's Pub, Scottish Central, Domaine Pinnacle, Hurley's Irish Pub, McAuslan Brewery, Ye Olde Orchard Pub, Intrawest - Mont-Tremblant and Miller Thomson Pouliot LLP and encourage you to support them by patronizing their establishments and choosing their goods and services.

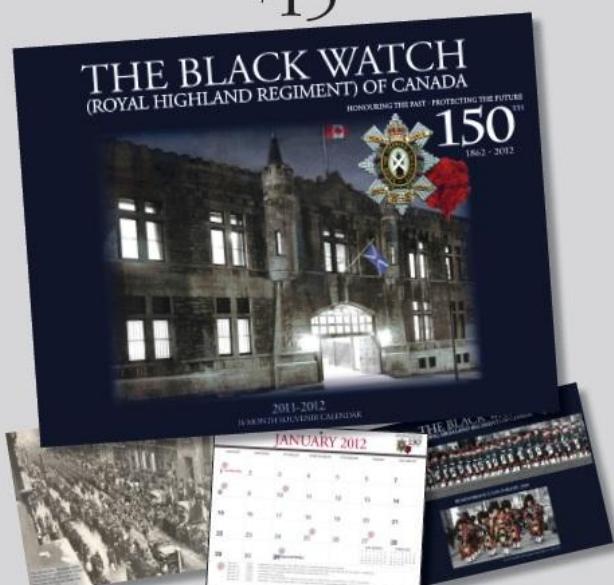
Special thanks must be extended to David Fownes, Norma King, Gillian Leitch, Brian MacKenzie, Anne Navin, Campbell Oliver, Sheila Ramsay, Tom Speirs and Scot Diamond for their work in making the evening a success. Additional credit is due to Gillian Leitch for organizing the Burns Quiz, which was a very nice way to make the whole event slightly less formal and more inclusive. Thanks must also be given to those who attended the dinner; the success of such events is always dependent upon the willingness of people to show up and participate actively in society activities. I think Burns would have very much enjoyed the evening's festivities.



## Flowers of the Forest

We extend our sympathy to the family and friends of: Graham R. Carruthers, life member, 1983; George Christie, life member 1969; John A. Cumming, annual member 1982; Donald E. Douglas, annual member 1990; June Norton Hunter, annual member 1980; Alex R. McAslan, life member 1991; David D. Ruddy, life member 1976.

## THE BLACK WATCH (ROYAL HIGHLAND REGIMENT) OF CANADA 150<sup>TH</sup> SOUVENIR CALENDAR **\$15**



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# @StAndrewSociety

Welcome to Twitter, St Andrew's Society! We're excited you're here! Twitter is all about what's happening right now. Follow what you're interested in and get Tweets in real time. You'll never be out of the loop again.

If you have a Twitter account, search us out. If not, get started, all you need to do is set up your profile. They you can discover who's on Twitter.

## New Members

The Society is very pleased to welcome new annual members: Kate Arthur, David R. Blair, Mildred Ruby Casey-Campbell, Chlodosinde Dodds, Geoffrey T. Dowd, Richard Guay, John A. Miller, David W. Peace, Karl Antoine Usakowski.

We are pleased to announce that Ellen Frances Bounsall McAuslan is an Associate Life Member. And the following have been transferred to Life Members: Moira R. Barclay-Fernie, annual member 1983; Judith Crosland Cowen, annual member, 2010; Jonathan Hunter Cowen, annual member 2010; Mark William Gallop, annual member 2008; Marie Senécal Tremblay McNiven, annual member 2007; Diana C. Wall, annual member 2004.

## Birth Announcement

To Kathryn Urbaniak and Derek Robertson, a daughter, Abigail Skye Ann, born on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2011. A sister for Lauren.



## 2011 Toast to the Lassies

A McGuckin

Let me start by saying that I'm flattered that I was asked to be here this evening, to deliver this particular toast. It's quite an honour. And, if I do say so myself – and I will – I think it's a testament to my knowledge and deft understanding of the opposite sex that I should be trusted to offer enlightened commentary on women. Also, Charlie Sheen was unavailable... something about a prior appointment with his parole officer.

Despite the confidence that I am the best man for the job, I did try to solicit the advice of friends, mostly to try and find some consensus as to what I should say, especially in regards to areas such as marriage – the most sacred covenant that can be shared between a man and a woman – and one where I have no experience whatsoever. Thankfully, as I would soon learn.

By total coincidence, the first group of friends I asked for advice happened to be the least enlightened and forgiving of women. These men

were angry, bitter occasionally vile and at some points very offensive.

No, I'm not talking about the Frasers.

These were my divorced friends.

Their comments need not be repeated here. Suffice to say some of them were very recently divorced.

(Ladies, don't worry. It's not just women these men can't stand. They also hate their lawyers.)

It wasn't all a loss, though. I did learn some colourful new language. I'm now crass enough to run for mayor of Chicago – and having had a layover at O'Hare a few months back, I apparently meet the residency requirements, as well.

I then spoke to my happily married friend (singular) who was considerably more enlightened as to how to talk about women and the mythic "good life". But the facility with which he got along with his wife – the great ease with which he droned on, and on and on, and on, about the great rewards of sacrifice in a marriage – made his answer, while very heartening, far too soporific to repeat at such a resplendent and festive occasions such as this... or even just in general conversation.

It seems that men who truly believe they understand women like to talk about it – a lot.

It's worth mentioning that his wife was there the whole time. She didn't seem impressed.

By this point I had begun to feel very distressed. I realized exactly why I was asked to deliver this particular toast: Because no one else in their right mind would ever want to do it.

I was distressed, but undeterred. I had one last trick up my sleeve. I asked one of my best and most trusted friends – a woman – what exactly I should say.

I called my friend Evelyn, whom I had met in a truly awful seminar on American Foreign policy while we were both still in graduate school. I explained the situation, and what was expected of me. I lamented the lacklustre responses I had received thus far, and how I would need her help if I was going to give this speech the real effort it deserved.

Getting that all off my chest, I felt relieved. Evelyn would know what to say. Kind, brilliant, beautiful Evelyn...

There was silence on the other side of the line. "Well?" I asked. "Alec," she replied, "...women have spent most of their history being oppressed by men. We were made to cook and clean, play second fiddle to even the most inept of your lot, and even today, where we do the same work, we get less pay."

"Yeah," I replied, "But –

"– there have been three goddamn waves of feminism since 1963, Alec, just to try and bring us to an even playing field."

I didn't know what to say. But that didn't matter – she wasn't done.

"As if that's not all bad enough. When the St Andrew's society needs someone to give a toast to women, YOU are who we get?? Pft. Good luck"

Click. The phone call was over.

I then realized why I was finding it so hard to write this speech... women are mean! Cruel even. (I know, I know, I'm only figuring this out now. I'm behind the curve.)

Of course, being an enlightened man of the world I know this isn't true. It's not that women are cruel, it's that we men simply aren't clever enough to appreciate how kind women actually are. Women aren't insane, as so many of my earlier respondents mused. After all, it was a man who created psychoanalysis, and was it not Pascal, another man – sort of – who mused that women were not able to be psychoanalyzed, so they should simply be adored?

(Ladies, I wouldn't take Pascal's musings as too much of a complement – Freud said the same thing about the Irish.)

Seriously, though, we have now come to the part of the toast where I disavow my previous remarks and remind the crowd just how wonderful women actually are.

This is fitting, as saying insensitive things and then frantically apologizing has defined most of my experience with women. (I actually called Evelyn back to say sorry – why? I have no idea... but I did it).

I can say in all honesty and seriousness, though, that this was by far the easiest part of the toast to write.

I believe that I can speak for all men here tonight when I say that all women – our girlfriends, our wives, our sisters, our mothers – and even the irate feminist grad students that we call friends – not only make us better men, but they also make us better human beings.

They teach us to be selfless. They drive us to achieve great things.

And when we have achieved greatness – in

**OKILL STUART**  
on the occasion of his  
**90<sup>th</sup>**  
**BIRTHDAY**

a grand party was held at the Louis-Joseph Forget house attended by 150 of his closest friends. Congratulations were received from HRH Prince Phillip, the Governor General of Canada and other dignitaries. The singing of the old war songs made this a truly joyous occasion.

**Happy Birthday  
Okill!**

From the St Lambert Journal of 9 Mar 2011

whatever desired from – they are the first ones to but our egos back in check. As well they should.

The notions that behind every great man stands a better woman – or that women are truly our better halves, are recognized in the enlightened world as being truisms. And rightfully so, because they sound the chord of truth; it is a chord that forever resonates in our collective memory, and one that gives us the strength and devotion to love the lassies of the world as they so rightly deserve.

And while we have complained in the past – and the smart money says we will continue to do so in the future – we know that those attributes which we find difficult are certainly worth enduring.

It is, after all, a small price to pay, for being allowed to live so freely with the better angles of our nature.

Gentlemen, please be upstanding and raise your glasses in a toast to the lassies.

## Quebec Thistle Council Dinner

A McGuckin

The Quebec Thistle Council held its annual dinner on 2 April at the Black Watch (RHR) of Canada's Armoury. This year, the Thistle Council was pleased to welcome CJAD's morning show host, Andrew Carter, as the Scotsman of the year. Wearing a kilt for the very first time, Mr Carter spoke fondly to the crowd of over 90 people about his family's Scottish heritage and the importance of Scots to Montreal and Canada.

Recognized alongside Mr Carter were the other winners of various prizes annually awarded by the Council. Mary Drehorn won for Scottish Country Dancing; Shona Pietrantonio and Janice Stephenson won for Highland Dancing; John Maloney won for Scottish Music; Chef Alain Monod won the award for Scottish Cuisine; and Dr Lawrence Hutchison won the award for his contribution to Scottish Cultural Activities.

The General John De Chastelain Special Award for Piping was presented to Pipe-Major Sacha Mathew, the newly appointed Pipe Major of the 306 wing Air Force Band, and the Gordon Atkinson Memorial Prize in Military History was awarded to Guy McNicholl.

Senator David Angus, Roberta Bolton and John Hart (in absentia) were declared "Fellows of the Thistle Council".

The evening was, as always, marked by enjoyable entertainment and Scottish food. This year, though, the absence of Council Chairman TRA Malcolm was felt by all. He is still recovering from medical issues, and we wish him all the best on the path back to good health.

The Quebec Thistle Council is a regrouping of many of Quebec's varied Scottish organizations which strives to promote cooperation and communication among its members.

## Toast to the Immortal Memory

W. Brent Cowan

Thank you, Mr Chairman, and thank you honoured guests, ladies and gentlemen for giving me the opportunity to wear once more this magnificent Fraser Tartan ensemble. I inherited these trews and this waistcoat from my dear friend George Fraser who, almost nine years ago, succumbed to the same terrible affliction which recently claimed the life of Tony Proudfoot.

George was a cardiologist on the faculty of McGill university and on staff of the Royal Victoria Hospital and St Mary's Hospital. He had an office on Cote des Neiges across a parking lot from St Mary's and when I was doing graduate work at the nearby Universite de Montreal, I would frequently pop in to



Thistle Dinner

his office and go out for lunch with him.

On one such occasion, George said that before going for lunch, he wanted to show me something at the hospital. We walked over and I followed him through the hospital until we reached a section closed off by a locked door with an overhead sign saying "Authorized Personnel Only". George keyed in a code to the locking mechanism and in we went.

I had barely got into the room when an odd-looking individual accosted me and grabbing hold of my cheek said,

**"FAIR FA YOUR HONEST,  
SONSIE FACE,"**

then he stabbed me in the belly with his finger continuing,

**"GREAT CHIEFTAIN OF THE  
PUDDIN RACE"**

Naturally I jumped back only to bump into someone else who said, accusingly,

**"WEE SLIKIT TIMOUROUS  
BEASTIE, O WHAT A PANIC'S IN  
THY BREASTIE"**

Then a third fellow who I must have offended in some way comes to me and says:

**"OF LORDLY AQUAINTANCE YOU BOAST  
AND THE DUKES THAT YOU DINED WITH YESTREEN  
YET AN INSECT'S AN INSECT AT MOST  
THO IT CRAWL ON THE CURL OF A QUEEN"**

I was just going to give him a piece of my mind when yet another of these oddballs decides to stick it to me saying:

**"Lord, to account who dares thee call,  
Or e'er dispute thy pleasure?**

**Else why, within so thick a wall,"** he says, pointing to my head,

**"Enclose so poor a treasure?"**

By this time I'd had enough and I turned to George, who was standing to the side with a bemused expression on his face, and said "What is this, your new psyche ward?" He said, "No. It's our Burns unit..."

Ah a burns unit... And that is what I'd like to talk about a bit more. Burns units. Every year we and thousands like us gather to pay our respects to the honoured bard. When toasting the immortal memory many refer to his great humanity and how he managed to capture in his poetic works just

about all aspects of life in such a way as to carry important truths down through the years to us two and a half centuries later. But I think he did much more. I believe that Burns contributed to the general flow of ideas that has shaped our world into what it is today from what it was when Burns was alive, and reading, and conversing, and versifying. And I'd like to explain why I believe this to be so.

Burns lived in a fascinating period of Scottish history. The span of his life from his birth in 1759 to his death in 1796 corresponded intimately with the period known as the Scottish Enlightenment. During this time great intellectual activity brewed and Edinburg was at its epi-centre. Great Scottish thinkers were produced. Thinkers such as political economist Adam Smith and philosopher David Hume as well as literary figures such as novelist Sir Walter Scott and, of course our poet Robert Burns. Literacy in Scotland was around 75%. By contrast literacy in England was about 60% and in France, less than 50%. Tellingly, literacy in New England was 95%. Now the more there are of people who can read, the more they can contribute to and shape the flow of ideas. What further set the Scottish Enlightenment apart from Europe and even the rest of Britain was its more collegial nature. Scottish intellectuals seemed more interested in ideas than in who should get credit for them or who was the more clever.

Adam Smith founded the Oyster Club and later the Select Club and the Poker Club. These clubs were in Edinburgh and diverse people came to meet and to discuss and debate ideas. Now who came to the clubs or corresponded with Smith? Probably just about everyone who was interested in ideas. For one, Benjamin Franklin did. Adam Smith even sent Franklin drafts of chapters of his Wealth of Nations for review and comment.

At around the same time our bard founded the Tarbolton Bachelor's Club, also to discuss great ideas. Rules for admittance were straightforward enough:

*"Every man proper for a member of this Society must have a frank, honest, open heart; above anything dirty or mean; and must be a professed*

lover of one or more of the female sex. No haughty, self-conceited person, who looks upon himself as superior to the rest of the Club, and especially no mean spirited, worldly mortal, whose only will is to heap up money shall upon any pretence whatever be admitted."

I suspect Adam Smith might have had similar rules for his club too. Although the Tarbolton bachelors no doubt brought ideas to a more basic level and lubricated discussions with a copious amount of the fruits of John Barlycorn.

The subjects up for discussion included:

*'From which do we derive more happiness - Love or Friendship?'*

*'Who is happier, "the savage man from the wilds or the peasant of a civilized country in the most happy situation?"'*

*'Suppose a young man, bred a farmer, but without any future, had it in his power to marry either of two women, the one a girl of large fortune, but neither handsome in person nor agreeable in conversation but who is competent to manage the household affairs of a farm; the other of them a girl every way agreeable in person, conversation and behaviour, but without any fortune and without any particular skills. Which of them shall he choose?'*

So what have we? Fraternal discussion groups to exchange ideas about philosophy, a generally high rate of literacy suggesting people are exposed to ideas more distant than their own personal experience and the pursuit of happiness seems to have been an important topic of discussion.

***"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."***

Do you think our Tarbolton Bachelor's Club may have had something in common with the authors of the American Declaration of Independence? Mightn't they have even debated it?

But our Tarbolton bachelors no doubt thoroughly lubricated their conversation with "Guid Scotch Drink". Burns certainly associated whiskey with creativity:

***O thou, my muse! guid auld Scotch drink!***



**Whether thro' wimplin worms thou jink,  
Or, richly brown, ream owre the brink,  
In glorious faem,  
Inspire me, till I lisp an' wink,  
To sing thy name!**

**O Whisky! soul o' plays and pranks!  
Accept a bardie's graffu' thanks!  
When wanting thee, what tuneless cranks  
Are my poor verses!  
Thou comes-they rattle in their ranks,  
At ither's arses!**

I began this talk reciting a few lines from verses most definitely targeted at "ither's arses". How about this one which Burns wrote in response to a poetical duel foisted upon him in a pub by one travelling salesman by the name of Andrew Turner who thought himself to be superior to Burns in poesy and just about everything else. Upon learning Turner's birth year, Burns quickly penned:

**In 1749 the diel gat stuff to make a swine  
and coost in the corner.  
Then wilily he changed his plan  
and shaped it something like a man and caw'd it  
Andrew Turner!**

Mr Turner's response, if any, is unknown.

In 1986 I made a solo tour through Ayrshire and the highlands by car. Ten years later I returned with my wife and newborn daughter. I noticed a few changes. In 1987 it was still common to say

"Cheerio" for good-bye. Not so in 1997. In 1987 the single-lane highland roads were barren of traffic the Wallace monument in Stirling had no line up. In 1997, after Hollywood produced "Braveheart" and "Rob Roy", much to the annoyance of locals the roads were plugged with day trippers and we abandoned any thought of climbing the Wallace monument to see his great two-handed sword. But in 1997 I purchased a copy of his complete works at the Burns cottage in Alloway and I presented it to my friend George Fraser. When he died I re-acquired the book.

I re-discovered the following inscription that I had written,

"George, I hope Burns gives you as much pleasure and insight into life and humanity as he has provided me." When I leafed through its pages I found faint tick marks marking a few stanzas of "Guid Scotch Drink", two of which I just read. If any of you knew George, you might guess why this particular poem intrigued him. And so I have another reason to be grateful to Burns. He allowed me this one last faint glimpse of my very dear friend.

But what was Robbie himself like in person? Many have tried to understand his character by interpreting his poetry. But we can get a closer

look through the eyes of a few direct observers. One of these was Sir Walter Scot who met the poet in a home in Edinburg when the future author of Ivanhoe, Rob Roy and Waverly was just fifteen and he wrote down a vivid description of the man. He told of Burns' great energy and complete unawareness of station that might to others be distinguished by dress or manor. According to Scott Burns' chief physical characteristic were his eyes which shone with tremendous intensity when he spoke. Scott tells us that a painting hanging on the wall captured the bard's attention and after he read the poetic inscription underneath he was much moved. He asked if anyone knew the author of the verse. Fifteen year old Walter Scott alone new that Langhorn had penned those words. Burns was impressed and the look of respect and fellowship he gave the teenaged Scott stayed with Scott for the rest of his life.

The Principal of Edinburgh University, at the peak of the Scottish Enlightenment, said of him that "Burns was "one of the most extraordinary men I ever met with, his poetry surprised me very much , his prose surprised me still more and his conversation surprised me more than both his poetry and his prose."

Across the Atlantic it is known that Thomas Jefferson came to admire Burns and gave George Washington a book of Burns' poetry that is still on display at Mt. Vernon.

Newspaper clippings from that period confirm that George Washington, when he was Worshipful Master of Alexandria Lodge No. 22 of the stone masons, subscribed to the second American edition of the poetry of Robert Burns.

Very recently Professor Ferenc Morton Szasz of Aberdeen University published, Abraham Lincoln



**Tossing the cabre around at the St. Patrick's Day Parade. Don't forget to head to the Montreal Highland Games this year!**

and Robert Burns, Connected Lives and Legends.

Szasz discovered that Lincoln had obtained a copy of burns poetry in the mid 1820s and that throughout his life he was known to recite many of Burns poems from memory

Szasz makes a very strong claim that Burns directly influenced Lincoln's world view and so was a very important factor in establishing what form the modern United States of America would take. I think he was perhaps over-ambitious in his analysis. However Burns very likely at least helped Lincoln coalesce abstract thinking into concepts that can be framed in a speech

Lincoln when asked to define democracy said

"As I would not be a slave, I would not be a master what differs from this, to the extent of that difference, is no democracy."

Burns wrote The Alter of Independence:

**Thou of an independent mind,  
With soul resolv'd, with soul resign'd;  
Prepar'd Power's proudest frown to brave,  
Who wilt not be, nor have a slave;  
Virtue alone who dost revere,  
Thy own reproach alone dost fear-  
Approach this shrine, and worship here.**

This poem presaged Abraham Lincoln to a' T' and Lincoln, as if on cue, strove to transform the United States of America into this alter of independence. Perhaps Lincoln drew strength to stay the course from these very lines.

That Burns was very much aware of what was going on in the new United States and elsewhere in the world is clear from his many poems touching upon the French and American revolutions. That he held his own political views on these matters is also quite clear from those same poems and other of his writings.

So the ideas that entered Burns' head and were

## Clan Gathering 2014

The Scottish Government has announced that another Homecoming year will be held over the course of 2014, in honour of the 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Bannockburn, though exact dates of events associated with this new Homecoming (such as another "Gathering" in Edinburgh) are not yet established. Recalling the event in 2009, reminded me that I had missed buying a copy of the DVD at the time. But while browsing on the Web site of the Council of Scottish Clans and Associations I found that they still had a limited number of copies of the official DVD for sale – see <http://www.cosca.net/> On the other hand, Scottish Television still has video clips of the event at <http://video.stv.tv/bc/scotland-gathering-20090725-gathering-colour>.

## Pot Luck Supper & Ceildih



Some of the fabulous entertainment enjoyed at the Pot Luck April 9<sup>th</sup>. Were you there? If not, make sure you come out next time to this fun, social evening.

synthesized almost instantaneously into brilliant verse were the product of his great learning and wonderful facility with language. And they percolated throughout his immediate world and across the oceans. I wouldn't say that his poetry changed the way people think but it must surely have been an element in the ebb and flow of ideas that connects our time with his.

Another friend and colleague of mine, The Reverend David Jones, touched upon how ideas flow in a sermon he once delivered and a copy of which he sent to me. Some of you may have known David. Like Burns, he had the knack of making life's experiences taste richer for all in his orbit. Like Burns his light was extinguished at far too early an age.

He wrote that: "The life-time drama that all of us are living (some at the front of the stage and others behind the scene, is at one-and-the-same time both baffling and beautiful because it carries with it implications that are both richer and deeper than anything we might imagine of its earthly, visible parts. The mystery of who we are far transcends strict science or the obvious laws of nature. The mystery of who we actually are is as much in the imagination as it could ever be somehow scripted on paper."

But to talk about this is to have to engage our imaginations. It is to say out loud something about something that most of us would recognize. Something about which people would either nod their head knowingly or cross their arms over their chests and sit back in their seats upset. Still, even that takes imagination because, in my experience at least, people don't come to church to hear what

they do not know. People come to church to hear said what they do not (themselves) know how to say. This then is the imagination of our gathering. This is the "Imagination of the Heart." And it isn't as hard to understand as I am seemingly making it sound. This poem, after all, this poem painted on the back of the boat of an unschooled Scottish fisherman is what it is all about:

**At Chapel, prayer or out to sea  
Sweet Christ the fisher comfort me  
Suffice for me my daily bread  
Some fishes and a dry safe bed.**

I mean, he could have said, "For Christ's sake, God, give me a sandwich and a place to sleep." But he didn't. Even an old Scottish fisherman found the kinds of words which require more imagination than what might quickly come to mind."

David hit the nail on the head. Poetry captures the imagination of the heart and helps crystallize and transmit ideas. It can make a simple thing or a complex thing seem noble and worth a great effort. It can take a vague awareness we all have and crystallize it into a memorable word picture and Burns was a master at this.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of July 1796 Burns died. He was buried on the 25<sup>th</sup>. A local cloth merchant by the name of William Grierson wrote an account of the funeral in his diary. So we know that it was a typical Scottish day with rain showers in the morning that yielded to sunny and warm periods in the afternoon before returning for a wet evening and night.

Grierson wrote: "This day at 12 o'clock went to the Burial of Robert Burns who died on the 21<sup>st</sup>. In respect to the Memory of such a genius as Mr Burns, his funeral was uncommonly splendid. The Military here consisting of the Cinque Ports Cavalry and Angusshire Fencibles who, having handsomely tendered their services, lined the streets on both sides from the Court House to the burial ground. The

#### **Annual Meeting Tidbit:**

These pins are worn by their prospective committee members and come from the Caledonian Society.



corpse was carried from the place where Mr Burns lived to the Court House last night.

The ceremony on the whole presented a solemn, grand, and affecting spectacle and accorded with the general sorrow and regret for the loss of a man, whose like, we can scarce see again.

As for his private character and behaviour, it might not have been so fair as could have been wished, but whatever faults he had I believe he was always worst for himself and it becomes us to pass over his failings in silence, and with veneration and esteem look to his immortal works which will live forever. I believe his extraordinary genius may be said to have been the cause of bringing him so soon to his end, his company being courted by all ranks of people and being of too easy and accommodating a temper which often involved him in scenes of Dissipation and Intoxication which by slow degrees impaired his health and at last totally ruined his constitution.

For originality of wit, rapidity of conception and fluency of phraseology he was unrivalled.

And so went our bard to his heavenly reward. Or did he? I've a wee story to tell...

You might recall he had a certain dislike of a rather hypocritical

Minister he called in derision, "Holy Willie". Well Holy Willy predeceased our favourite bard and Burns had this epitaph for his old nemesis:

**Here Holy Willie's sair worn clay  
Taks up its last abode;  
His saul has ta'en some other way,  
I fear, the left-hand road.**

So Holy Willy was sent down the left hand road to the fires of hell itself. But he was such an unpleasant person that the devil himself eventually kicked him out and sent him on his way up to heaven. Burns on the other hand managed to skip on by St Peter through the pearly gates. I suppose brother Grierson's words had an effect on heaven's gatekeeper. But something happened. It didn't take Burns long to cause great offence and down he was sent.

As he approached the fires below whom did he spy but Holy Willy on his way up.

"Holy Willy, 'pon my oath said Burns. Where are you off to? Heaven, of course replies the old preacher. And what do you intend to do when you get there?" asks Burns.

## **Keep Walking!**

Pour yourself a wee dram and have a gander at this: <http://www.crikey.com.au/2010/08/17/johnniewalker/?source=cmaler>. This is a great advertisement for Johnnie Walker. Go for a stroll with actor Robert Carlyle as he narrates the story of Johnnie Walker in this beautifully shot and immaculately rehearsed single-take commercial.

Seek an audience with the Virgin Mary is the response.

"Too late", says Burns.

Burns lived just 37 years, but he helped in some way create the world in which we now live. He helped shape the ideas that have now become so much a part of us all that we simply take them for granted. There is a notion that all of us on this Earth are connected through just six lives. Well that same concept can be applied back through time. All here, for instance, are just two conversations at most away from George the Sixth depicted in The King's Speech. That makes us maybe four conversations from Queen Victoria and perhaps six from the one we honour tonight. Imagine Burns sitting just six places down from you around our temporal table. That is indeed how close he is to us all.

#### I close with this grace:

O thou, in whom we live and move-  
Who made the sea and shore;  
Thy goodness constantly we prove,  
And grateful would adore;  
And, if it please Thee, Power above!  
Still grant us, with such store,  
The friend we trust, the fair we love-  
And we desire no more. Amen

Now I would ask you all, ladies and gentlemen, to rise with me and toast the immortal memory of Robbie Burns.

The immortal memory!

## St. Andrew's Society Pub Quiz 2011

1. Who Journeyed to Scotland in 563 AD to found a Christian settlement?

- St Columba

2. What was the capital of Scotland before Edinburgh?

- Dumferline

3. Who is considered the father of modern television?

- John Logie Baird

4. The Duke of Rothesay is a hereditary title of which Royal peerage?

- The Prince of Wales

5. What year was Robbie Burns born?

- 1759

6. Name of the Queen's home in Edinburgh?

- Palace of Holyrood House

7. What are the projectiles in curling called?

- Stones

8. The inhabitants of which island were called Scotties?

- Ireland

9. Who is the Scottish lead singer of the Eurhythmics?



Darryl Bowes-Lyon, the winner of this year's Hutchinson Award.

- Annie Lennox

10. What Scottish group had the hit song "Big Country"?

- Big Country

11. Name the four emblems on Montreal's flag?

- Rose, Thistle, Shamrock, Fleur de Lys

12. When did the St Andrew's Society last March in Montreal's St Patrick's parade?

- 2011

13. Who is the president of the St Andrew's Society?

- Peter McAuslan

14. What is a philibeg?

- A kilt

15. Where was Sir Arthur Conan Doyle born?

- Edinburgh

16. Name the actor who currently plays the Doctor in Doctor Who?

- Matt Smith

17. When did the Montreal Canadiens last win the Stanley Cup?

- 1993

18. When was the St. Andrew's Society founded?

- 1835

19. What year were the Montreal Canadiens founded?

- 1909

20. What street is the St. Andrew's Society office on?

- Sherbrooke Street West

21. What is Catherine Middleton's middle name?

- Elizabeth

22. Name the village that Catherine grew up in?

- Bucklebury

## Society Ties

Society ties are still available. The embroidered logo on the tie is a golden rampant lion on a cross. These navy blue ties are similar to the Society's previous ties, except the logo is larger and they are made of silk. The price, including taxes and delivery,

is only \$20. If you are interested in purchasing one, please contact the Society's office.

## Reply to the Toast to the Lassies

S. Stevenson

Thank you Alec – I reckon you covered us in glory as well as a few other bits and pieces!



**Susan Stevenson replying to the Toast to the Lassies.**

I'll have to start with a couple of confessions...First, this is only the second Burns Dinner I've been to in my life – clearly it should become an annual event! And second, it's a long while since I was called a 'lassie'... so thank you!

What lovely things Alec said about us, ladies! It is great to have recognized all the excellent qualities we possess and have them declared in public. And of course we know that the men we love know how to charm us. Perhaps more often than not they quoted the poems of the man we celebrate tonight.

I grew up in Kilmarnock and was shown as a child the building from which the poems of Robert Burns were published – the famous Kilmarnock edition. In school there, his works were part of my serious education. What extraordinary insights he had into the vagaries of the human spirit. In his all too short life, he certainly experienced more than most of us in longer lifetimes. And he did love the lassies!

As LASSIES, old and young here this evening, you men know how much you owe us! Fine companionship, good food, clean clothes, a warm and friendly bed – but we've got the other side to us as well as you are quite aware – chiding and nagging and keeping you men in order. We know how to advise you too!

*Noo, wha this tale of truth shall read,  
Ilk man and mother's son take heed;  
Whene'er to drink you are inclined,  
Or cutty sarks run in your mind,  
Think! Ye may buy joys o'er dear –  
Remember Tam o'Shanter's mare.*

When all is said and done, however, you'll agree I hope that we are worth all the trouble. And as the evening draws to its close and we all thank each other for a grand time, I'll ask you to just listen once again to loving words that are timeless...

*My love is like a red red rose  
That's newly sprung in June;  
My love is like the melody*

*That's sweetly played in tune.*

*So fair are thou my bonnie lass  
So deep in love am I;  
And I will love thee still, my dear  
Till a' the seas gang dry.*

*Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,  
And the rocks melt wi' the sun;  
And I will love thee still my dear  
While the sands o' life shall run.*

Thank you Alec, and thank you gentlemen ...It's been a braw evening!

## Reception in Honour of the Principal of the University of St. Andrews



The following was taken at a reception hosted by the Society, the McEuen Scholarship Foundation and the Macdonald Stewart Foundation. In the photo are Peter McAuslan, Society President, Dr. Louise Richardson, Principal, University of St. Andrews and John Aylen, McEuen Scholarship Foundation. Dr. Richardson was in Montreal to speak at an International Studies Conference.

## Private Rental Spaces: Households and Business Storage

Lock-It Storage Inc. has been providing a storage locker to the Society for many years. Their clean and secure facility is located five minutes from downtown just below Westmount, off the Glen at 4840 Acorn Street. Telephone is: 514 934-0386.

Mini storage is an inexpensive way to safely store personal and business items. They offer sizes as small as a closet or as large as a garage.

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