

Howff Club News

The newsletter of the Dumfries Burns Howff Club

October 2007

Let's enjoy the good times together

I feel it is a great honour for me to be your president. As most of you will be aware, I am the third member of the Johnstone family to be accorded this privilege with my brothers Jack and Tom preceding me. My father was never the president but he loved the club and used to attend meetings with his friends. For him the Howff was an enjoyable release from his hard-working day.

May I welcome everyone to what I believe will be another season of successful events where we celebrate the life and works of Robert Burns. But first I would like to remind everyone of the recent changes to the payment of annual subscrip-

President Alistair Johnstone looks forward to a busy and fulfilling year for the Howff Club

tions. Our general meeting in April voted to bring forward the payment of fees. These are now due by the end of May and apart from better cash flow it will mean that committee members are not having to pursue late payers on an evening such as the St Andrew's night when they should be relaxed and enjoying



themselves. It will also mean that by the end of June we will know who has resigned and vacancies can be filled giving new members the chance to become involved in our first main event, Hallowe'en night.

Next year will see a new club event in the Ellisland Fair. We hope to have ploughing, blacksmith, crookmaking and

falconry with period dress and I would ask all club members to support this day.

I also have an eye on the big anniversary that is coming up in 2009. We have many good, vibrant people in the club that could help with this. Please get in touch so that we have a strong team. Finally, may I wish you all a very good year.



New focus on junior Burns club

The Executive Committee has decided to focus on a serious attempt to resurrect the Junior Burns Club. It was successful in the past and fulfilled one of the main aims of the Howff Club, to promote the works of Robert Burns particularly to the next generation.

When originally set up, the late Jim Clark held the position of the Schools Liaison Officer for our club and membership of the Junior Burns Club was open to prizewinners at the annual SSCBA schools competition together with some

other children taking part who expressed an interest.

Junior Burns Club members were invited with parents and friends to attend a function at Ellisland where they were asked to recite or sing. Haggis was on the menu although burgers proved more popular. The Howff Club provided the book tokens for the prizes at the Schools Competition, but in addition books of Burns poetry were gifted to members of the Junior Burns Club.

It ran successfully for several years, however, due to many

factors and other activities, the Junior Burns Club has not been in existence for the past two years.

It is generally agreed that the original format was successful and should be developed with a function such as a concert at Ellisland, held in March, is believed to be the best way forward.

Early days, indeed, but the committee is now proposing to develop ideas and commence liaising with the local education department and others.

DAVID MILLER



CONQUERING HEROES: the Howff Club boolers knocked spots off Dumbarton Burns Club in their annual match, leaving them to nurse the runners-up trophy.

Another busy year

Coldstream Bridge

Senior Vice-president David Miller deputised for president Alistair Johnstone on May 6 at the annual ceremony to commemorate the visit of Robert Burns in May, 1787 when he crossed the Tweed Bridge and stood on English soil for the first time. David laid a wreath on behalf of the club. The company followed the saltire flag and a piper to the Craw Green where an address by the president of Coldstream Burns Club was given and a toast was drunk.

Wauchope Cairn

Fourteen members and friends attended the annual event organised by Hawick Burns Club on July 8 at the spot where Burns' friend and supporter, "The Guidwife o' Wauchope" lived. A lively social hour followed at the premises of Hawick Burns Club.

Brow Well Service

Unusually fine weather complemented this year's event at the Brow Well on July 19, where the club was well represented. Federation president Angus Middleton delivered a stirring address and club piper Calum Watson played a lament. SSCBA Senior Vice-president and club treasurer David Baird proposed the vote of thanks.

Edinburgh Tattoo

A coach with members and friends travelled to Edinburgh on August 18 to the spectacular event at Edinburgh Castle. It rained heavily all day, however, the Tattoo was unforgettable with marching bands from Russia, the US and an exotically dressed troupe from Thailand. The massed pipes and drums were an emotional highlight topped by the lone piper on the

castle ramparts. The club received a special welcome over the PA system from the Tattoo announcer Alastair Hutton, a guest speaker at the Globe Inn some years ago.

Jean Armour Dinner

The third Jean Armour Dinner was held in the Globe Inn on July 9 when the toast to "Jean" was proposed by Mrs Jane Brown. Dr Valentina Bold spoke on the "Other Women in Burns' life". The evening was notable for the superb artistes including young Shelly Clark from Sanquhar who sang and played the clarsach.

Contact

Alistair Johnstone, President (01387) 710353; David Smith Hon. Secretary, 261033; David Baird Hon. Treasurer, 267794; Gordon Johnston Hon. Librarian 263248.



Coming up

Hallowe'en Supper

Wednesday, October 31
Speaker, Michael Duguid, Gatehouse. *Ticket £14 from secretary or members of the committee.*

St Andrew's Night Dinner

Thursday, November 29,
Speaker, Bill Dawson, Alloa.

119th Anniversary Dinner

Friday, January 25
Immortal Memory, Prof. Ted Cowan.

Annual General Meeting

Thursday, April 24.

Winter Lectures

October 25

George Taylor
Sailors Three

November 22

Frank Ryan
Journalism

February 28

John Picken
The Romans in Galloway

March 27

George Thomson
Col. De Peyster

April 17

Whisky tasting in the clubroom.

Diary Dates

October 19, Soiree at Ellisland.

March 28, Games night at Marchmount Bowling Club.

April 4, Spring Fling at Easterbrook Hall.

Functions commence at 7pm. Friends of members most welcome



From the Secretary

At the Annual General Meeting in April, it was agreed that membership subscriptions would be payable within one month of the date of the AGM, members failing would be deemed to have resigned. This will come into effect from the date of the AGM in 2008. The deadline for subs this year is still the date

of the Hallowe'en Supper. Subs are, £10 Ordinary or £6 Retirement Pensioner. The Treasurer would be grateful if subs were paid as soon as possible.

Welcome Back

Members are delighted to hear that honorary member Peter Kormylo is returning to the district after a sojourn doing missionary work in Edinburgh.

Obituaries

Members were saddened by the recent death of two of the Howff's honorary members. Lord Ewing of Kirkford who proposed the "Immortal Memory" in 1986 and Dr James MacKay, author of the bicentenary edition of Burns' works in 1996, who delivered his toast entirely in rhyme at the club's centenary dinner in 1989.