



E-mail: DunedinBurnsClub@gmail.com

Webpage: <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=135456204891>



Official Newsletter of the Dunedin Burns Club December 2011

Greetings to all our Burns Club members. This is your club so please send all your news, snippets, and suggestions to your Committee.

UNVEILING THE ROBERT BURNS STATUE PLAQUE

Professor Tom Devine unveiled the plaque on the Robert Burns Statue in the Octagon on Saturday 19 November after the opening of The Scottish Festival at the Dunedin City Library. At the library he read his favourite Burns poem/song *Is there for honest poverty (A man's a man for a' that)*

“... What though on hamely fare
we dine

Wear hoddin grey, an' a' that?

Gie fools their silks, and knaves
their wine

A man's a man for a' that.

For a' that, an' a' that.

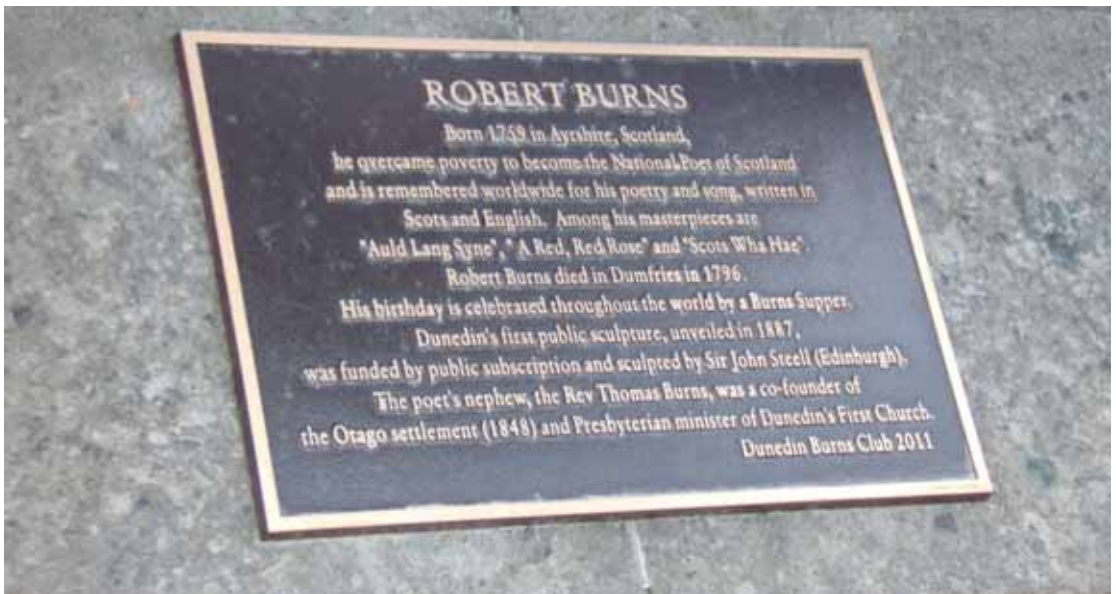
The honest man, tho' e'er sae
poor

Is king o' men for a' that. ...”

Photo: Courtesy of Angela McCarthy

At the unveiling with Professor Devine. Front row from left: Margaret Campbell, Frances Brodie, Wayne Allen, Professor Tom Devine; Back row from left: Bruce Spittle, Ann Barsby, Jack McLeod, Professor Angela McCarthy, Professor Liam McIlvanney.





Plaque on the Robert Burns statue

The plaque reads: ROBERT BURNS. Born 1759 in Ayrshire, Scotland, he overcame poverty to become the National Poet of Scotland and is remembered worldwide for his poetry and song, written in Scots and English. Among his masterpieces are “Auld Lang Syne”, “A Red, Red Rose” and “Scots Wha Hae”. Robert Burns died in Dumfries in 1796. His birthday is celebrated throughout the world by a Burns Supper. Dunedin’s first public sculpture, unveiled in 1887, was funded by public subscription and sculpted by Sir John Steell (Edinburgh). The poet’s nephew, the Rev Thomas Burns, was a co-founder of the Otago settlement (1848) and Presbyterian minister of Dunedin’s First Church. Dunedin Burns Club 2011.

Professor Devine’s participation in the Scottish Festival was enabled by the Centre for Irish and Scottish Studies, the Otago Scottish Heritage Council, the Dunedin-Edinburgh Sister City Society, the University of Edinburgh and the Dunedin Burns Club.

150 AND 120 YEAR CELEBRATIONS

Speaking after the opening of the Scottish Festival, Bruce Spittle noted that it was 150 years since a Burns Club was first formed in Dunedin and 120 years since the Club was constituted in its present form. In an article in the *Otago Witness* on 17 March 1898 on biographical sketches of the colonists of the first decade it is noted that John Barr arrived in Otago in the early 1850’s and inaugurated a Burns Club. He died on 18 September 1889 so his Club must have commenced prior to the constitution of the present Club in 1891. For many years (e.g., from 1954 until 1983) the Roll of the Burns Federation, Kilmarnock, has given the date of institution of the Dunedin Burns Club as 1861.

UNVEILING OF THE DUNEDIN-EDINBURGH STONE

In 1999, Edinburgh-based sculptor Sylvia Stewart took some basalt rock from the Water of Leith, near the Owheo Building, Department of Computer Science, University of Otago, in Dunedin, New Zealand and transported it home to sculpt it. The resulting Owheo Monument was then installed as a piece of public art on the quayside at Rennie’s Isle in Leith, Edinburgh, Scotland. She also created a matching sculpture, The Dunedin-Edinburgh Stone, from Edinburgh granite for gifting to the Dunedin City Council.

In August 2006, an official delegation, including Mayor Peter Chin, DCC Chief Executive Jim Harland, and members of the Dunedin-Edinburgh Sister City Society travelled to Edinburgh to

attend the opening weekend of the 2006 Edinburgh Festival. During the round of official functions and meetings, opportunities were taken by all parties to foster a number of links between the two cities.

Those present from the Society included the Chair, Pamela Jemmett, Secretary, Neville Jemmett and committee members, Margaret Campbell and Les Cantwell. The delegation visited the Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop to view The Dunedin-Edinburgh Stone which was duly gifted to Dunedin City. The art work subsequently arrived in Dunedin in July 2007 to await an official unveiling.

On Tuesday 22 November 2011, Professor Devine and Mayor Dave Cull joined the Dunedin-Edinburgh Sister City Society to unveil the sculpture, on the grassed esplanade beside the Waters of Leith, outside the Forsyth Barr Stadium, Ravensbourne Road, Dunedin.

The Mayor read a greeting from the Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh. Representatives of various Dunedin Scottish groups, including the Dunedin Burns Club, also attended. The Mayor recited a short poem adapted from Ancient Gaelic runes to complete the ceremony.

The Dunedin-Edinburgh Stone and its Edinburgh counterpart, The Owheo Monument, represent the long-lasting friendship between Edinburgh and Dunedin, are symbols of the sister city relationship and complete the 'circle of trade' between the two cities.



Mayor Dave Cull and Professor Tom Devine with the Sylvia Stewart sculpture by the Water of Leith.



The Owheo Monument at Rennie's Isle in Leith, Edinburgh created by Edinburgh-based sculptor Sylvia Stewart from a volcanic magma (basalt) rock from the Water of Leith, Dunedin.

Above: The Owheo monument
Above right: Detail of sculpture
Right: The setting of the sculpture on Rennie's Isle

The Owheo Building, Department of Computer Science, University of Otago is situated near the Water of Leith at 133 Union Street, E.

Possible themes to the sculptures are: "From rough beginnings beauty may emerge," "Two cities, different on the surface but united and rock solid," and "Don't judge a book by its cover."



OTHER EVENTS WITH PROFESSOR TOM DEVINE

Professor Devine also spoke at the Otago Settlers Museum on The “Death” and Reinvention of Scotland. He noted the historical fears surrounding the “death” of the ancient identity of Scotland and the “invention” of Scottishness in tartanry, song, story and myth. He gave further talks at the Dunedin City Library on The Lowland Clearances and the Scottish Exodus to New Zealand and at St. Paul’s Cathedral on The Puzzle of Scottish Sectarianism. The Library talk was followed by a signing of Professor Devine’s latest book *To the ends of the earth: Scotland’s global diaspora 1750–2010*. This followed his best selling 1999 publication *The Scottish nation 1700–2000*. The book was well received in Dunedin. Professor Devine said that more books were sold at the Dunedin function than the total for his previous 18 launches combined.



Professor Tom Devine introducing the Robert Burns poem “Is there for honest poverty” at the Dunedin City Library.



Professor Tom Devine speaking about Robert Burns before unveiling the plaque on the Robert Burns Statue, the Octagon.

2012 ROBERT BURNS POETRY COMPETITION

The 2012 Robert Burns Poetry Competition for Published and Unpublished Poets was launched at the Dunedin City Library on 19 November 2011. Entries close on Monday 9 January 2012. Details are available at: www.dunedinlibraries.govt.nz. The 2012 competition for young poets will be launched in July 2012, during National Poetry Week, a time that fits better with the school year.

BURNS SUPPER 25 JANUARY 2012

You are all warmly invited, together with your friends, to the 2012 Burns Supper on 25 January 2012, at 6.30 pm for 7 pm, at the Leviathan Hotel, 27 Queens Garden. Tickets, at \$45 a person, are available at The Scottish Shop, 17 George Street, Dunedin. We will start with singing The Star o’ Rabbie Burns followed by the piping in the haggis. Associate Professor John Stenhouse, Department of History and Art History, University of Otago, will give the Immortal Memory Address.



The second verse of The Star o’ Rabbie Burns contains the words “Though he was but a ploughman lad and wore the hodden grey.” Hodden grey, also referred to in the poem read by Professor Devine, was a coarse homespun cloth made from a mixture of black and white wool.

We hope you will be able to join us at the Burns Supper.