



New Brunswick Scottish Cultural Association Inc.

IN UMBRA CARDUI VIOLAE VALESCANT

"In the thistle's shadow, violets grow stronger."

Press Release 335

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New Brunswick Scottish descents celebrate Robbie Burns Day!

Issued by Rod MacIntosh VP of Communications

Born in Alloway, Ayrshire, in 1759 to a poor tenant farmer, Robert Burns was the eldest of seven. He spent his youth working his father's farm, but in spite of his poverty (and at his father's insistence) he was extremely well read. At the tender age of 15, he penned his first verse, "My Handsome Nell", which was an ode to the other subjects that dominated his life beyond farming - namely scotch and women.

With the death of his father in 1784, Robert and his brother (Gilbert) became partners on the farm but he was always more interested in the romantic nature of poetry than the mundane responsibilities of running a family farm. With a keen eye for the ladies, his misadventures eventually led to several illegitimate children, including twins to the woman who would become his wife, Jean Armour.

With the decision finally to abandon farming, his first collection "Poems- Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect - Kilmarnock Edition" was published and received much critical acclaim. He moved around the country, eventually arriving in Edinburgh. In a matter of weeks his image was transformed from local hero to a national celebrity. However, with fame came little fortune and he found it necessary to take a job as an excise man to supplement his meager income while continuing to write.

Robert Burns final years were devoted to penning such great poetic masterpieces as The Lea Rig, Tam O'Shanter and a Red, Red Rose. He died of heart disease at the young age of only 37 contributed to by the hard manual work he undertook when he was young. His death occurred on the same day as his wife Jean gave birth to his last son, Maxwell. A gigantic crowd of 10,000 people came to pay their respects in the day of his burial. However his popularity during his short life, it was nothing to compare to the heights reached since his death.

On the anniversary of his birth for over 200 years (January 25th), Scots throughout the world celebrate Robert Burns with a supper and/or evening of entertainment where they often ceremoniously address the haggis, the ladies and even the whisky - A celebration which would undoubtedly make him proud.

Closer to home, New Brunswick Scots keep the rich traditions and culture of their forefathers alive with several Robert Burns celebrations scheduled throughout the Province this January. Several communities, large and small, will celebrate a unique evening of food, music and dance to remember Scotland's most famous "Bard". Dust off those kilts and sporrans and make plans to attend the Robert Burns celebration in your area - or even organize your own activity. Contact the New Brunswick Scottish Cultural Association for more information on Burns celebrations in your area.

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