



The Life and Songs of Robert Burns

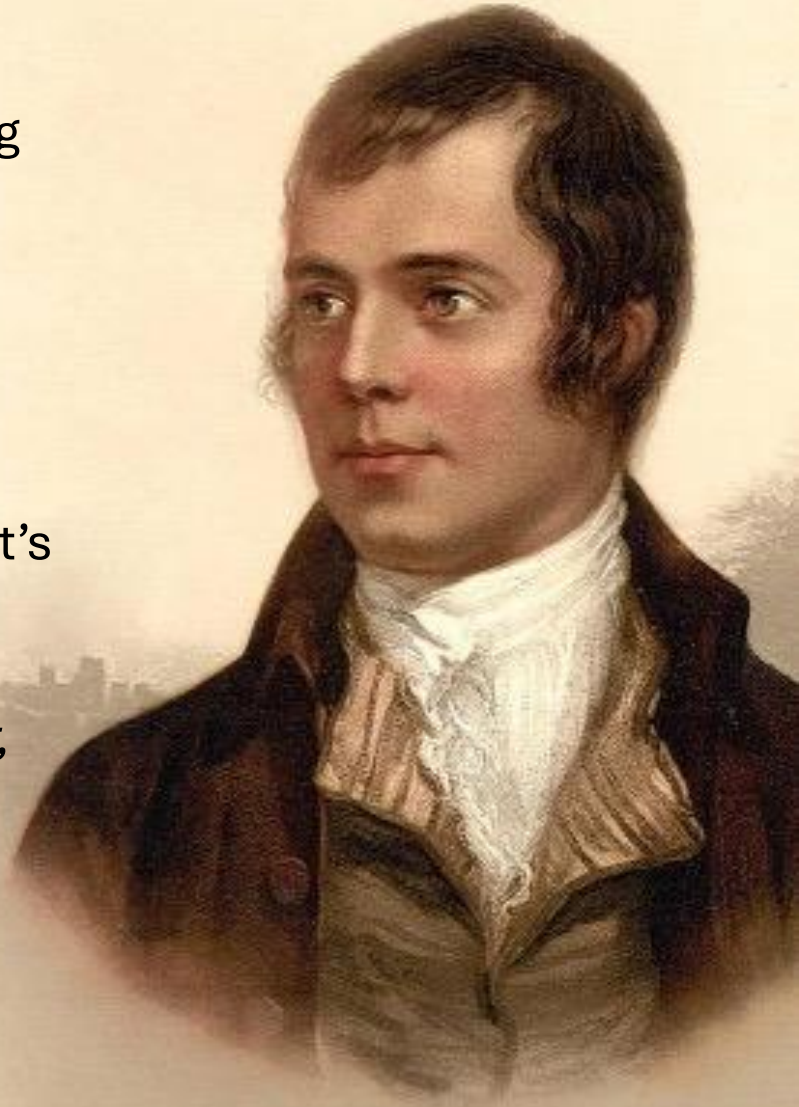
Featuring Tara

Bruce Gray



Robert Burns: Scotland's National Bard

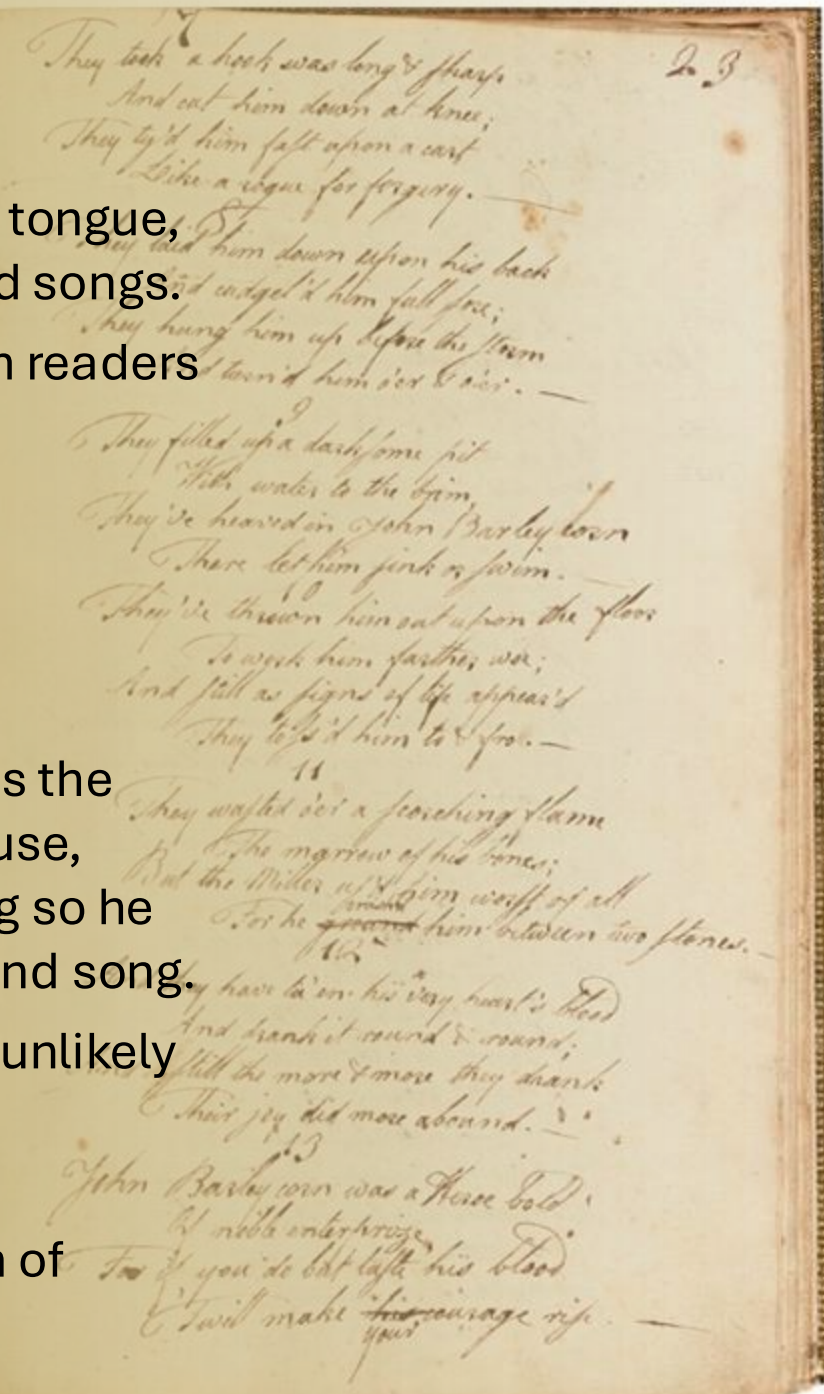
- Born January 25, 1759, Alloway, Ayrshire; Died July 21, 1796, in Dumfries
- Known as the 'Ploughman Poet' due his humble family farming upbringing
- Life was short (37 years) but prolific and impactful. His rich legacy resonates not only in Scotland, but around the world
- Burns wrote primarily in the Scots language. His work is vast and varied, encompassing traditional ballads, poems, satires, epistles, and songs
- Burns body of work represents a rich tapestry that weaves together the rustic life of 18th century Scotland, its people, politics, as well as the poet's own philosophies and emotional landscapes
- Among his most famous works are the songs *Auld Lang Syne*, *My Luve is Like a Red Red Rose*, and *Scots Wha Hae*; and the poems *Tam o' Shanter*, *To a Mouse*, *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, and *Address to a Haggis*
- The breadth of Burns' work reflects a complex man who was at once a lover, a rebel, a philosopher, and keen social observer
- Burns ability to give voice to the common people and to articulate a distinctly Scottish identity in the face of cultural and political pressures from England set him apart as a national figure



"Rabbie" Burns (1759 – 1796)

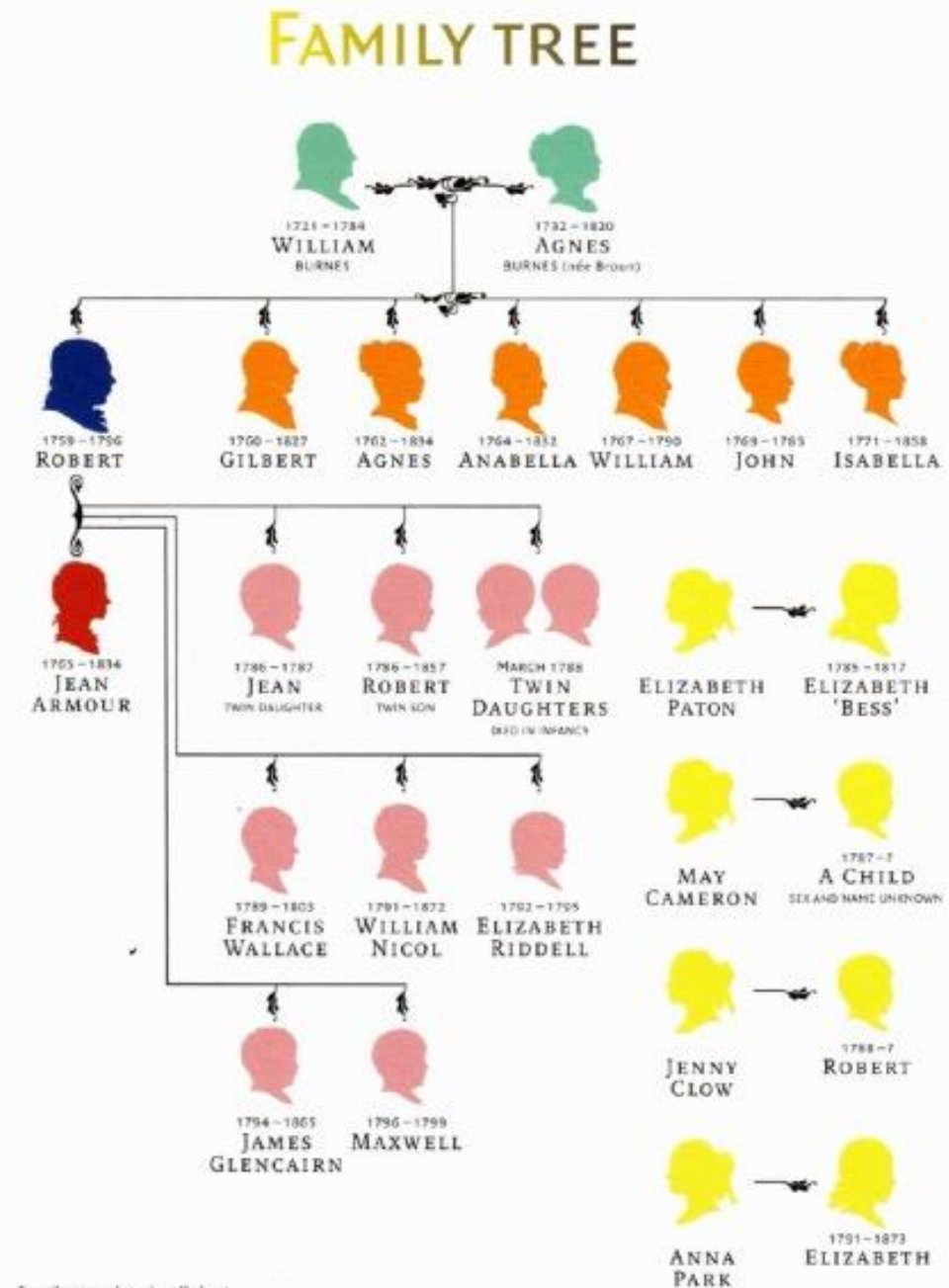
Burns and the Scots Language

- The Scots Language is what makes Burns Burns. Scots was his mother tongue, and it was the medium in which he composed all of his best poems and songs.
- The Scots language in Burns' poems and songs can often leave modern readers pretty stumped with lines such as
 - 'When drouthy neighbors, neighbors meet'
 - 'Painch, tripe, or thairm'
 - 'How 'twas a towmond auld, sin lint was l' the bell'
 - 'A daimen icker in a thrave'
- After the Acts of Union in 1707, the English language displaced Scots as the official language of Scotland. Noticing how rapidly it was falling out of use, Burns made a conscious choice to write in his mother tongue. By doing so he arrested its decline, legitimizing the language as a medium for poetry and song.
- Unfortunately, in modern celebrations of his life, the Scots language is unlikely to get even a passing mention, as many have either forgotten or overlooked how important the language was to Burns as a writer.
- Today many versions of his songs have been Anglicized removing much of which is quintessentially Burns.



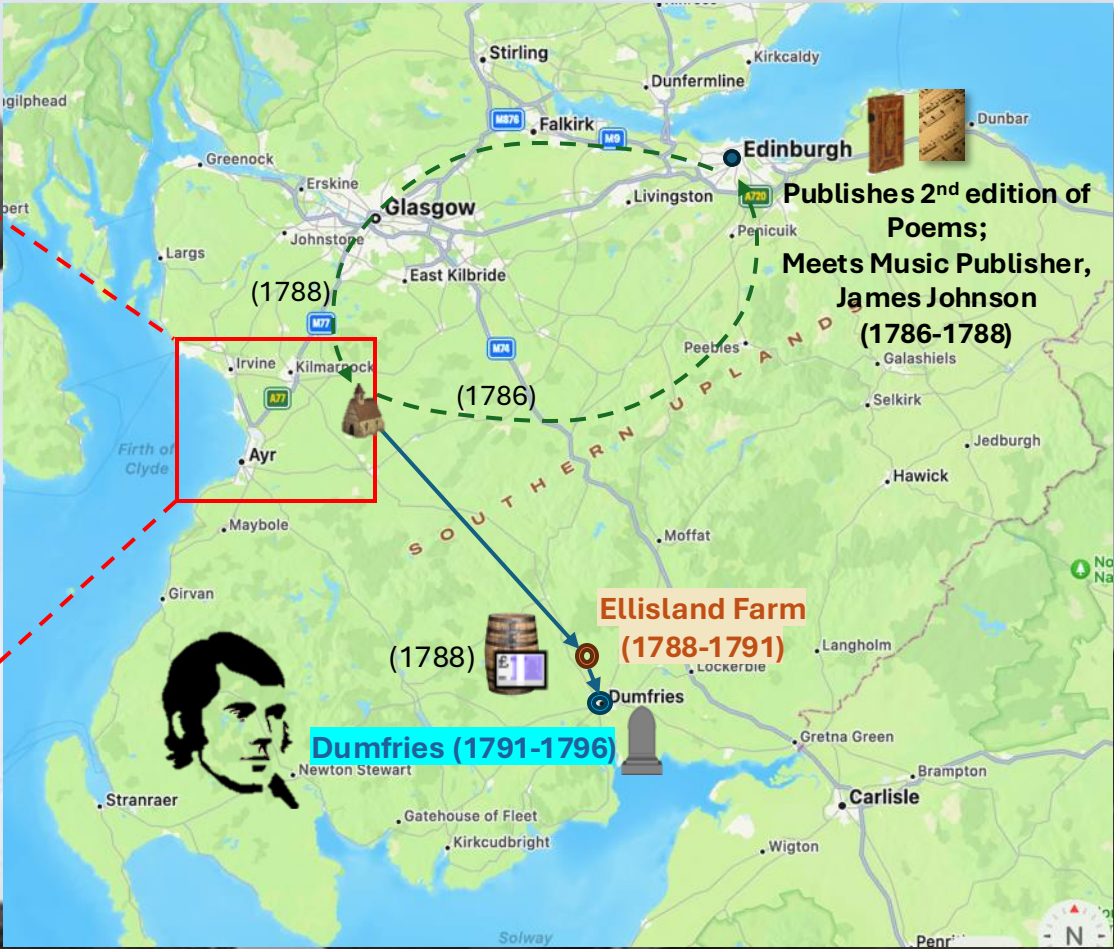
Robert Burns: Familial Facts

- Robert Burns was the eldest child of William & Agnes Burnes (Broun). William and Agnes went on to have 6 more children.
- William spelled his name Burnes, which was the conventional spelling in Northeast Scotland, where he was from. Sometime after his father's death in 1784, Robert, changed his name to Burns, which was the common spelling in Ayrshire.
- Robert was given the nickname "Rabbie" due to his command of the Scots language. Burns never referred to himself as Rabbie, but rather more typically as Rob, Rab, or Robin.
- Robert Burns met his wife Jean Armour in 1785, and his first children with her (twins) were born out of wedlock in 1786.
- The scandal created a period of estrangement from 1786 to 1788. Robert and Jean officially married in 1788, and went on to have 7 more children, with only 3 surviving to maturity.
- Robert was also a womanizer and fathered 4 additional children with 4 separate women. He had many extramarital affairs, the most famous was with Margaret Campbell, who is said to have inspired some of Burns' most popular work.



Family tree showing Robert and his siblings; his children by his wife Jean Armour; and his children by other women.

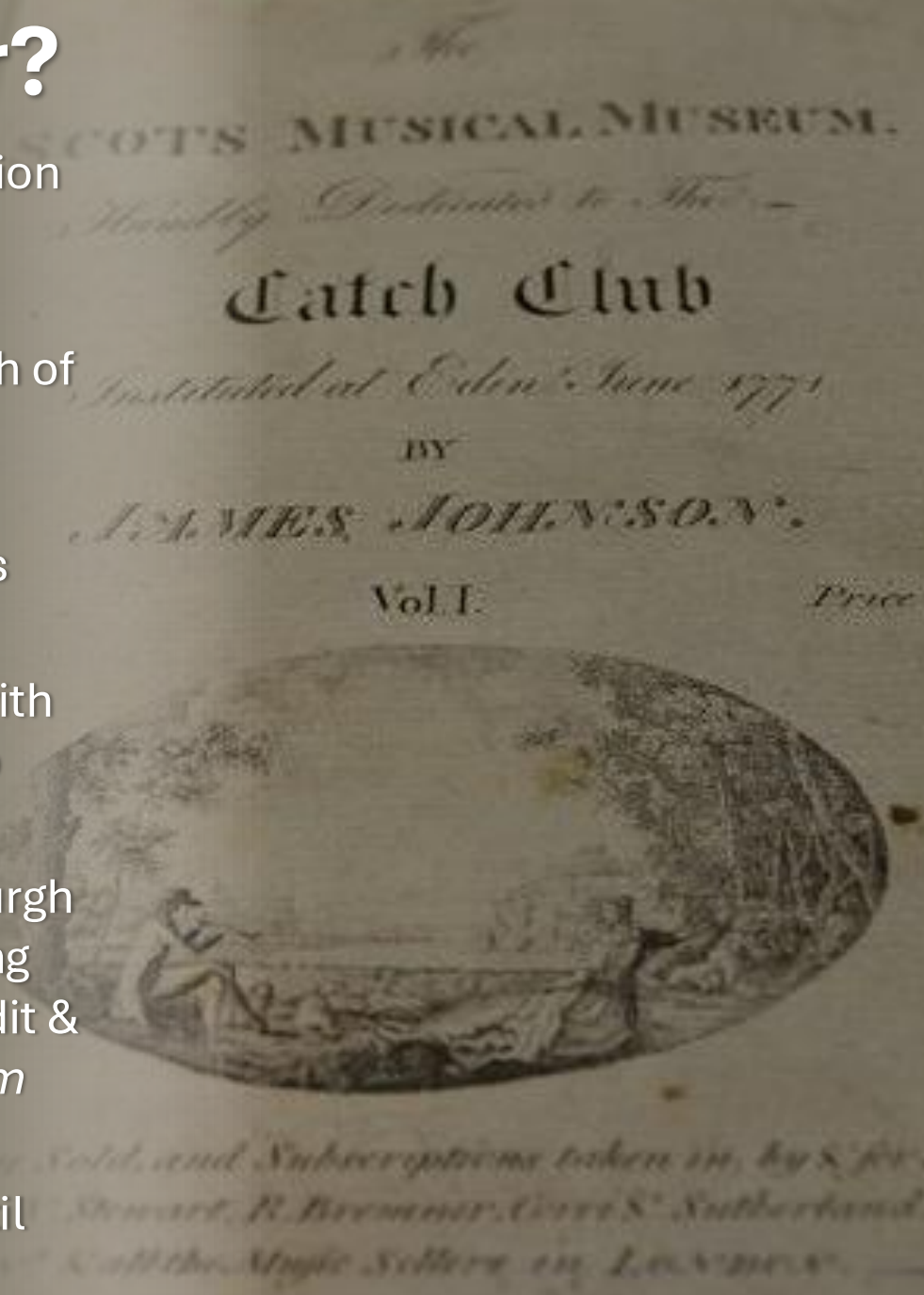
Robert Burns: Geographic Timeline



Burns Statue Square, Ayr, Scotland
George Anderson Lawson (1892)

Robert Burns: Poet or Songwriter?

- Robert Burns quickly became a phenomenon after the publication of his *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* in 1786.
- Burns, a tenant farmer from Ayrshire, wrote in Scots with such directness in emotion and wit, that he appealed to a wide swath of contemporary audiences as entirely authentic.
- While poetry consumed most of his early writings from 1783 to 1788, Burns chief passion from 1789 until his death in 1796 was writing and collecting Scots songs
- Burns wrote around 240 or so poems; however, he is credited with writing, collecting, and “improving” somewhere between 370 to over 400 songs, nearly 100 more than Lennon and McCartney
- Burns introduction to music publisher James Johnson in Edinburgh 1786, set him on a series of journeys through Scotland collecting songs and tunes from the oral tradition, which he would later edit & publish in multiple volumes of Johnson’s *Scots Musical Museum*
- Burns made an enormous contribution to our knowledge and understanding of the traditional Scots song genre, which up until the time of Robert Burns, had never been written down.



The Alloway Years

- Robert Burns family came from a long line of farmers. His father, William Burnes, hailed from the northeast of Scotland, where he had trained as a landscape gardener
- By 1754, aged 33, William was practicing his trade on an estate near Alloway, a small hamlet in the open countryside of Kyle on the Ayrshire coast.
- Unmarried he lived a frugal life sending regular funds for the care of his elderly, impoverished father, Robert
- After his father's death in 1754 he set his sights on starting his own market garden, and bought land at Alloway, naming it "New Gardens" to reflect his ambition
- In 1756 he went to Maybole Fair where he met Agnes Broun. They married the following year, and Agnes came to live in the newly built cottage at Alloway in 1757
- William found the going difficult, so he took work doing gardening on a neighboring estate, while Agnes took over running of the land
- The small Burnes farm raised cows, which Agnes milked making butter and cheese to sell at market along with corn. The farm also grew kale, potatoes, leeks, carrots and onions to feed the couples growing family

A painting of a small, single-story cottage with a thatched roof and a chimney. The cottage is situated in a rural landscape with a dirt path leading to it. A person is standing near the entrance. The sky is overcast and grey. In the foreground, there are large haystacks and a wooden wheelbarrow.

*Burnes Cottage, Alloway, 1876
painting by Samuel Bough*

“There Was A Lad Born in Kyle”

- In early 1758, four months after she married William Burns, Agnes became pregnant
- On January 25, 1759, attended by the blacksmith's wife, Agnes gave birth to Robert in the box bed in the kitchen of the cottage at Alloway
- In keeping with Scottish tradition, Robert was named after his paternal grandfather
- Three other siblings, Gilbert (1760), Agnes (1762), and Anabella (1764) would also be born in that same bed
- When the baby was only a week old, a ferocious storm damaged the cottage, destroying part of the roof and gable-end
- So severe was the damage that Agnes and her baby son had to seek shelter with a neighbor while the house was repaired
- Little could William and Agnes have imagined that their tiny infant would grow up to be Scotland's national poet, celebrated the world over



Rantin' Rovin' Robin (1787)

(tune Daintie Davie)

There was a lad was born in Kyle,
But whatna day o' whatna style,
I doubt it's hardly worth the while
To be sae nice wi' Robin.

Chorus. - *Robin was a rovin' boy,
Rantin', rovin', rantin', rovin',
Robin was a rovin' boy,
Rantin', rovin', Robin!*

Our monarch's hindmost year but ane
Was five-and-twenty days begun,
'Twas then a blast o' Janwar' win'
Blew hansom in on Robin.

The gossip keekit in his loof,
Quo' scho, "Wha lives will see the proof,
This waly boy will be nae coof:
I think we'll ca' him Robin."

He'll hae misfortunes great an' sma',
But aye a heart aboon them a',
He'll be a credit till us a'-
We'll a' be proud o' Robin."

"But sure as three times three mak nine,
I see by ilka score and line,
This chap will dearly like our kin',
So leeze me on thee! Robin."

"Guid faith," quo', scho, "I doubt you gar
The bonie lasses lie aspar;
But twenty fauts ye may hae waur
So blessins on thee! Robin."

Rantin' Rovin' Robin - Discussion

- Optimistic autobiographical song written to celebrate his 28th birthday on January 25, 1787
- The song forecasts his imminent fame as reflected in a prophecy given at his birth
- “*Lad was born in Kyle*” – Kyle was the central of three districts in the sheriffdom of Ayr, where Alloway was located. The phrase, *rantin', rovin' Robin* – describes Robin, or Robert, as lively, free-spirited and somewhat rebellious. In the first verse the speaker suggests Robin's unpredictable nature might not warrant excess attention or fuss
- The song harks back to the momentous, and as Burns half-jokingly suggests, portentous storm that damaged the house he was born in, as well as many other properties in the neighborhood

*“Our monarch's hindmost year but ane
Was five-and-twenty days begun,
'Twas then a blast o' Janwar' win'
Blew hansel in on Robin.”*

1759, the year before the last year of
George II's reign (1760)

January storm on the 25th signified a gift
of good luck (*hansel*)

- *Gossip* refers to a female relative or neighbor, presumably the blacksmith's wife, who attended the birth and looks in Robin's palm (*keekit in his loof*) and portends his future, and despite his inevitable misfortunes, she prophesizes that Robin will be a credit to the community
- In the last verse the speaker playfully teases Robin about his behavior with the ladies; however, that would be far from his worst faults (*But twenty fauts ye may hae waur*), so blessings on him

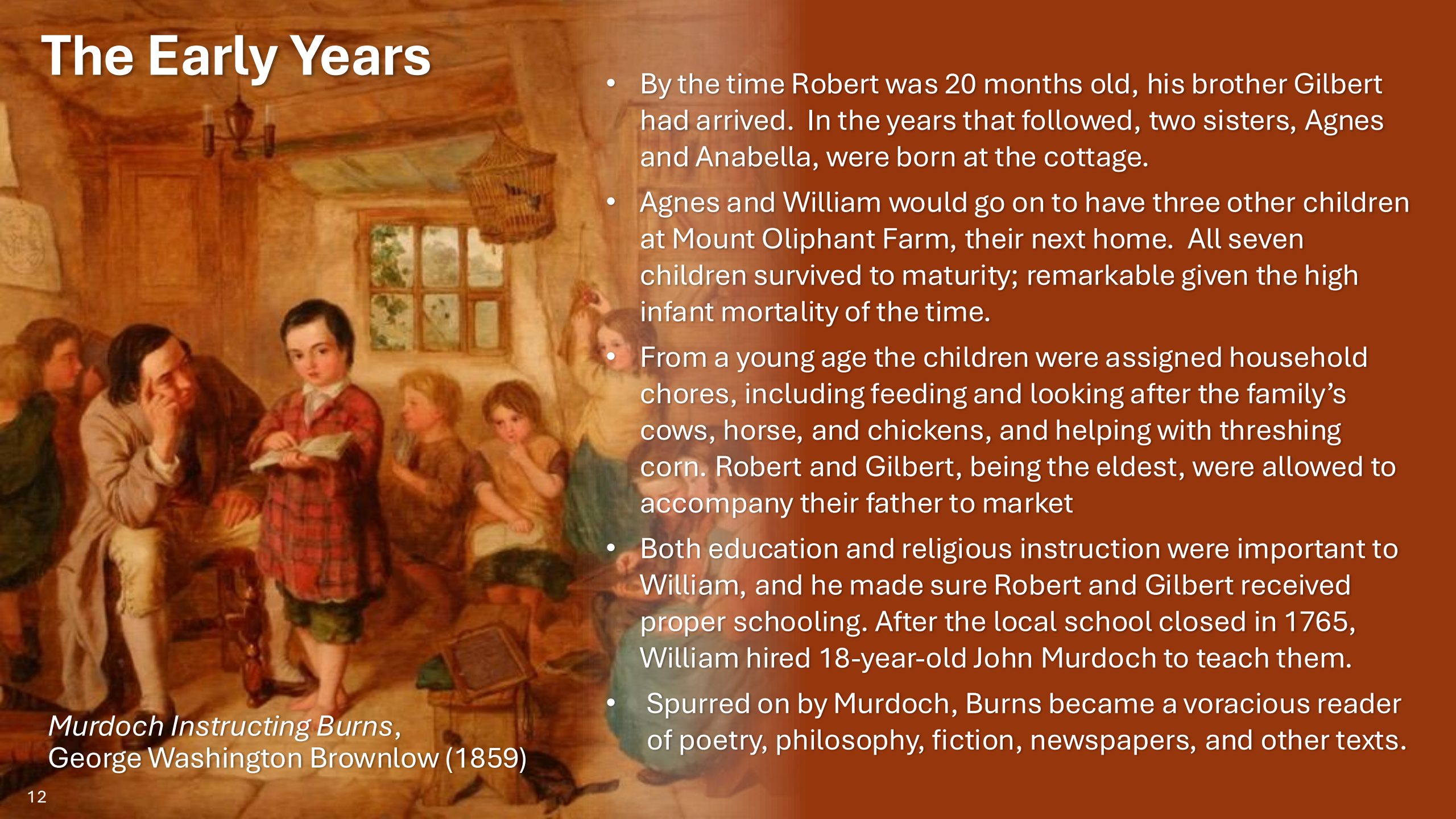
The Alloway Cottage

- The cottage at Alloway was originally a 'but and ben' design: two rooms divided by a bed and partition. The family lived in one room, with the animals next door.
- When Robert was growing up, the relationship between man and animal was totally interdependent. Animals were not to be consumed but rather kept for milk, eggs, wool, and strength to pull the plough
- William later extended the cottage adding a barn and byre, allowing expansion of the living space.
- The kitchen was where day-to-day life took place. Here the family slept on box beds, dressed and undressed, cooked on the range, ate, drank, talked, sang and made music sitting around the fire
- The spence (or parlor) was the more formal room and offered some level of domestic privacy. This room was likely used for Bible reading, family prayer and tutoring, as well as receiving guests.
- In the evenings, the cottage was lit by candles and oil lamps. As peat burned in the fire, young Robert would sit listening to songs, music, stories, and gossip of his family and friends



The Cottage, John Fleming (1816)

The Early Years

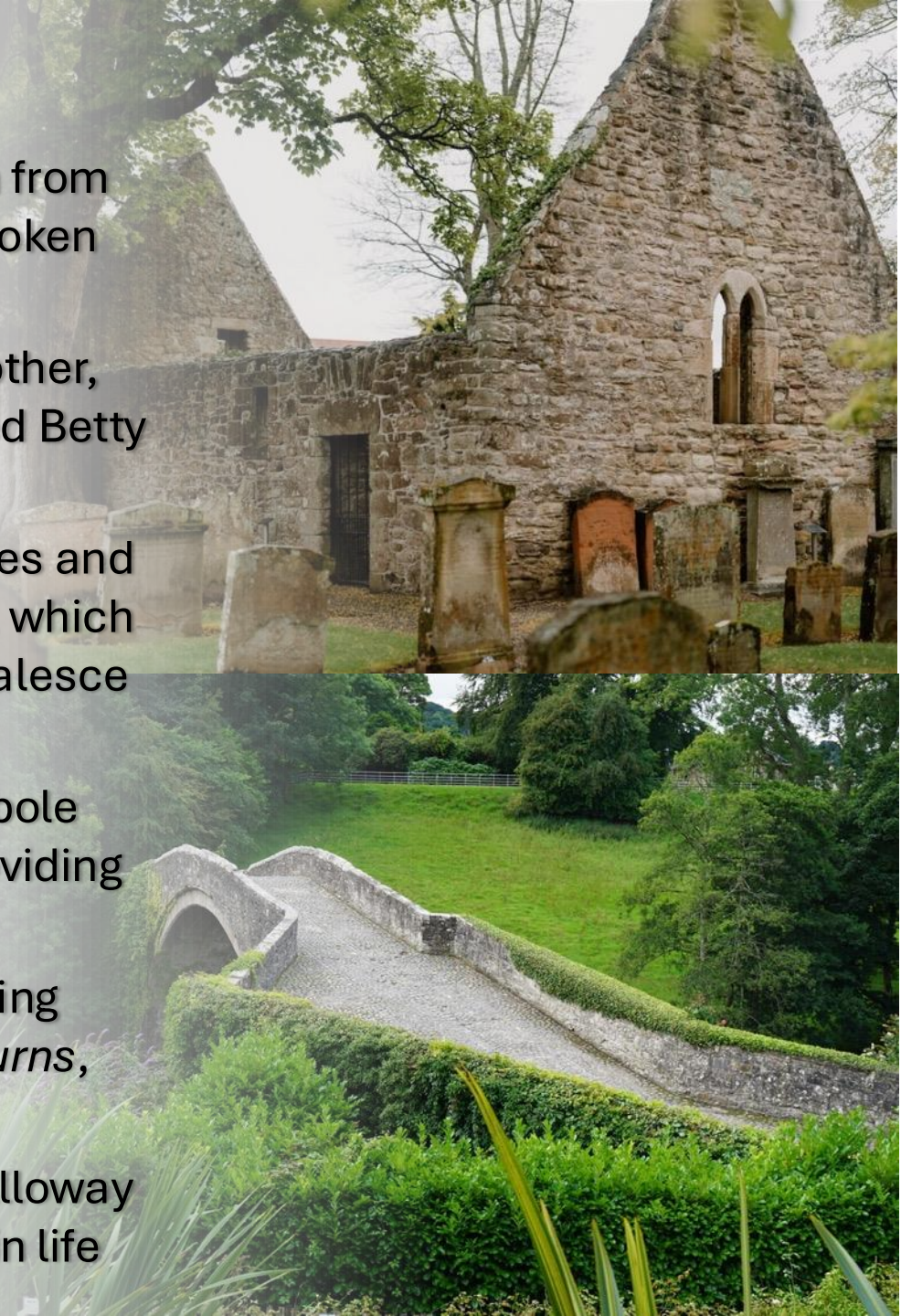


- By the time Robert was 20 months old, his brother Gilbert had arrived. In the years that followed, two sisters, Agnes and Anabella, were born at the cottage.
- Agnes and William would go on to have three other children at Mount Oliphant Farm, their next home. All seven children survived to maturity; remarkable given the high infant mortality of the time.
- From a young age the children were assigned household chores, including feeding and looking after the family's cows, horse, and chickens, and helping with threshing corn. Robert and Gilbert, being the eldest, were allowed to accompany their father to market
- Both education and religious instruction were important to William, and he made sure Robert and Gilbert received proper schooling. After the local school closed in 1765, William hired 18-year-old John Murdoch to teach them.
- Spurred on by Murdoch, Burns became a voracious reader of poetry, philosophy, fiction, newspapers, and other texts.

Murdoch Instructing Burns,
George Washington Brownlow (1859)

Seeds of Inspiration

- Of equal importance to Robert's formal learning, was education from his mother's side of the family through sung Scots songs and spoken Scots folktales
- By the time Robert was 6, the small cottage was home to his mother, father, three younger siblings, and a cousin of his mother's called Betty Davidson, who helped about the house and dairy
- Betty was very superstitious and had a vast collection of folktales and songs concerning devils, ghosts, fairies, brownies, and witches, which had a far-reaching influence on Robert. These stories would coalesce into his epic poem *Tam o' Shanter* nearly 25 years later in 1790
- Just outside the cottage, the main road running from Ayr to Maybole carried regular passage of travelers, coaches, and carriages providing an endless source of entertainment for Robert and his siblings
- When not working, the children had time to play in the surrounding countryside, with large open spaces to run free, *guddle* in the *burns*, and watch wildlife in the woods and hills around the River Doon
- Robert's upbringing, education, and childhood experiences at Alloway helped shape his character, and would influence his work later in life



Banks o' Doon (1791)

(tune: Foggy Dew)

Ye banks and braes o' bonie Doon,
How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair?
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae weary, fu' o' care!

Thou'll break my heart, thou warbling bird,
That wantons thro' the flowering thorn:
Thou minds me o' departed joys,
Departed never to return.

Aft hae I rov'd by Bonie Doon,
To see the rose and woodbine twine:
And ilka bird sang o' its Luve,
And fondly sae did I o' mine;.

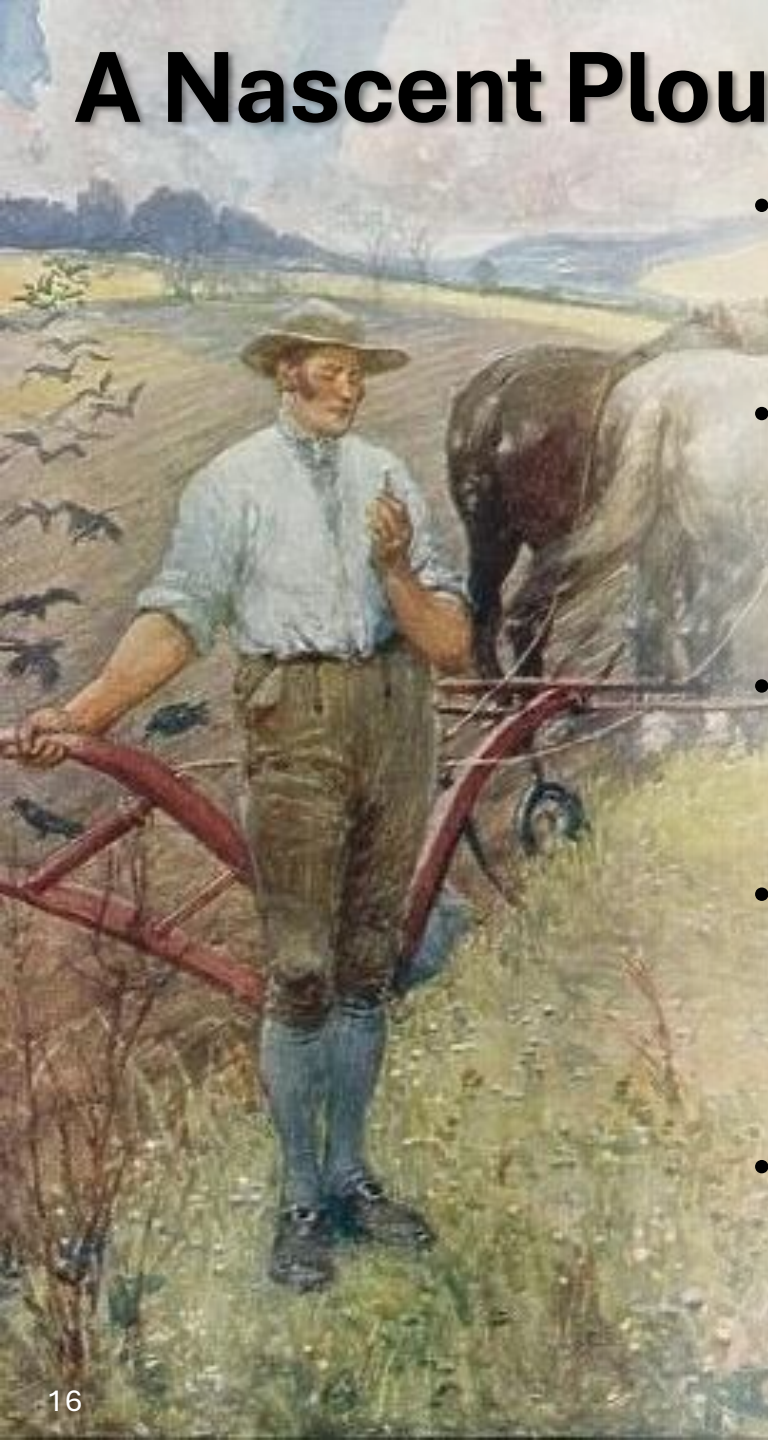
Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
Fu' sweet upon its thorny tree!
And my fause Luvver staw my rose,
But ah! he left the thorn wi' me.

***Banks o' Doon* - Discussion**

- The Banks o' Doon was written by Burns in 1791 and is sometimes known as “Ye Banks and Braes”. Much of the imagery of Burns’ poetry and song are firmly rooted in the landscape around Alloway, and *The Banks o' Doon* is one such example.
- Burns wrote three versions of the song, all published in 1791, with the third version, shown here, being the one most often sung
- The song is about heartbreak and longing for a lost love, and was inspired by the story of Margaret Kennedy (1766-1795), who was seduced and then abandoned by Andrew McDouall, the son of a wealthy family and Member of the British Parliament
- The song shows the contrast between the beauty of nature around the hills and banks of the River Doon where Burns grew up, and the sadness and loss felt by the song’s protagonist
- The imagery of the rose and woodbine (honeysuckle) intertwining mirrors the love the protagonist once shared and each bird singing of its own love reminds the protagonist of their own lost love
- In the final verse, the protagonist plucks a sweet rose from its thorny tree; however, their false lover stole the rose and left the thorn behind as a cruel reminder. This betrayal echoes the pain the protagonist feels, as their heart and trust have been shattered.



A Nascent Ploughman Poet



- With the birth of Anabella in 1764, the small cottage at Alloway was getting too cramped. William Burnes moved the family in 1766 to a nearby farm at Mount Oliphant, where they became tenant farmers
- The family spent 11 years at Mount Oliphant, but the land was difficult to cultivate, and they endured periods of significant hardship. Burnes was unable to afford farmhands, and the family had to work the fields themselves.
- Mount Oliphant was where Robert had his first experience of agricultural work. By 1772 at age 13, Robert was assisting his father and by age 15 he was the principal laborer.
- In 1774 Burns wrote his first song, ‘*O Once I Lov’d a Bonie Lass*’ (aka ‘*Handsome Nell*’) at age 15. The song was inspired by a farm servant named Nellie Kilpatrick, for whom Burns was infatuated with. This song marks the beginning of Burn’s lifelong fascination with the opposite sex.
- Burns would later write that he “*never had the least thought or inclination of turning Poet till I got once heartily in love, and then rhyme and song were, in a manner, the spontaneous language of my heart*”

Handsome Nell (1774)

O once I lov'd a bonnie lass,
Aye, and I love her still;
And whilst that virtue warms my breast,
I'll love my handsome Nell.

As bonnie lasses I hae seen,
And mony full as braw;
But for a modest gracefu' mein,
The like I never saw.

A bonny lass I will confess,
Is pleasant to the e'e ,
But without some better qualities
She's no a lass for me.

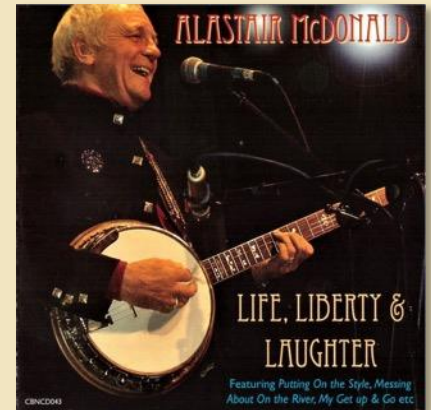
But Nelly's looks are blythe and sweet,
And what is best of a' ,
Her reputation is compleat,
And fair without a flaw;

She dresses ay sae clean and neat,
Both decent and genteel;
And then there's something in her gait
Gars ony dress look weel.

A gaudy dress and gentle air
May slightly touch the heart,
But it's innocence and modesty
That polishes the dart.

'Tis this in Nelly pleases me,
'Tis this enchants my soul;
For absolutely in my breast
She reigns without control.

Alistair McDonald
October 2021



Handsome Nell - Discussion

- The first song written by Burns in 1774 at age 15 whilst living at Mount Oliphant Farm and is often treated as a poem. Song was not published until 1803, seven years after his death.
- This song was originally published with an unnamed tune and as such it is not often performed as there is no widely accepted accompanying music. Many of the available recordings today use vastly different tunes.
- Burns recorded the song in the first of his Commonplace Books from 1783 to 1785. In a preface to the song, he wrote *“It is, indeed, very puerile and silly, but I am always pleased with it, as it recalls to my mind those happy days when my heart was yet honest, and my tongue was sincere.”*
- Burns himself never identified Nell by her surname, and the first name he gave, Nelly or Nellie is typically used as a nickname for ‘Helen’. Some significant doubts exist as to the actual identity of Burn’s first romantic love.
- It was first thought to be a woman named Nelly Blair based on an unsigned letter to the *Scotsman* newspaper in 1828, but Burn’s youngest sister, Isobel, identified her as Nelly Kilpatrick in 1851 when she was 80 years old. This was unlikely to be firsthand knowledge, as Isobel was only 3 years old in 1774.

“The Best-Laid Schemes o’ Mice and Men...”

- Tenant farming at Mount Oliphant was a step up in social rank, but the farm with its poor soil proved to be a desperate grind for the Burnes family. The strain of running the farm with few resources, little money, and minimal return aged Robert’s father prematurely.
- To make matters worse, their landlord died in November 1769 and the estate passed into the control of a factor, who was stricter with timely rent payment
- While at Mount Oliphant Farms, William and Agnes had three more children, William (1767), John (1769), and Isabella/Isobel (1771), making the situation at Mount Oliphant more and more untenable
- In 1777 William moved his large family to a 130-acre farm at Lochlea, near Tarbolton. In 1782, William was involved in litigation regarding rent arrears against his landlord. The Court ultimately ruled in William’s favor in January 1784 but not before he fell gravely ill and exhausted his savings.
- William Burnes died on February 13th, 1784, and was buried in the Auld Kirk graveyard in Alloway. Robert and Gilbert take on the lease at Mossgiel Farm where he composed many of his best-known works, including *To a Mouse*
- Burns’ experiences as a tenant farmer could not have been more significant for his writing. The difficulties the family faced helped anchor his poetry and song in the harsh realities of his time, lending it rich human meaning.



Belle of Mauchline

- At the beginning of 1786, Robert turned 27, with his life seemingly lurching from one crisis to another. His first child had recently been born out of wedlock in 1785 to Elizabeth Paton, a servant girl working at Lochlea Farm
- At the time Burns' first illegitimate child was born, he and Jean Armour of Mauchline were in a relationship, and by the end of 1785 she was pregnant; subsequently giving birth to twins in the fall of 1786
- Robert signed a paper attesting his marriage to Jean; however, her parents were furious when she broke the news in March of 1786 and sent their daughter to stay with relatives in Paisley to avoid local scandal.
- Word spread nevertheless and the Mauchline Kirk recalled her in June to admit she was pregnant out of wedlock and to name the father. Robert was also called to admit his part in the affair.
- In July, Jean's father, James Armour, had issued a warrant for Robert's arrest to recover substantial damages on his daughter's behalf. Robert essentially went into hiding and his despair was evident in his correspondence at the time
- To escape his situation, he contemplated leaving Scotland for Jamaica, but with little money, Burns needed to raise funds for his passage, and the idea of publishing his works came to the fore

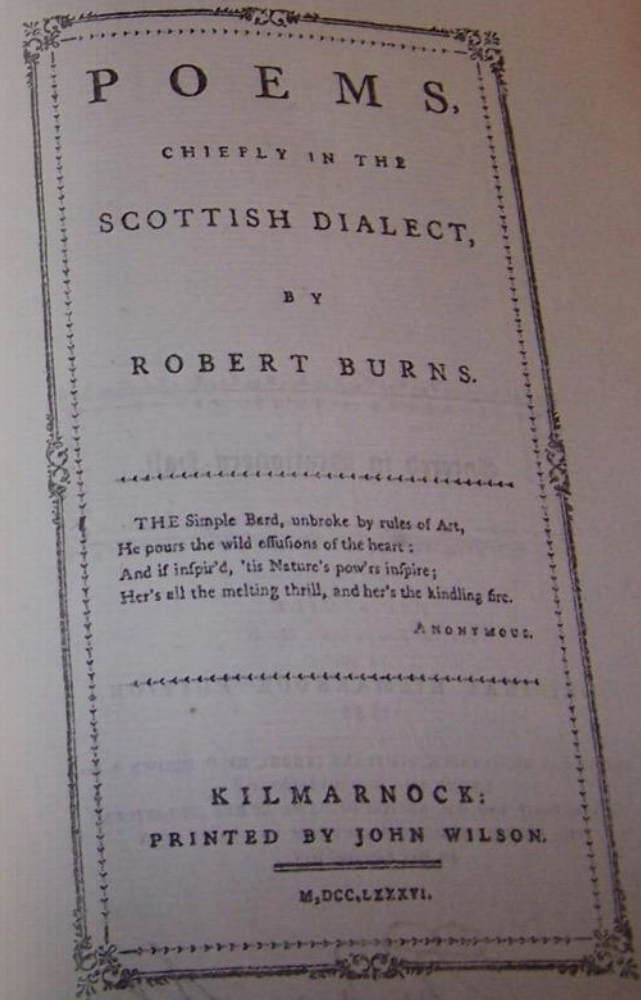


JEAN ARMOUR
1765 - 1834
WIFE OF ROBERT BURNS
ERECTED BY
BURNS HOWFF CLUB
SEPTEMBER 2004

*Statue of Jean Armour,
Dumfries*

The Kilmarnock Edition

- Burns changed his plan to emigrate and focused his energy on publishing his work. He approached the printer John Wilson, based in Kilmarnock
- Wilson was concerned about the financial risk and requested Burns obtain a list of potential purchasers, which Burns duly did
- Priced at 3 shillings a copy, the cost represented the equivalent of a week's income for the average worker, but despite this, Burns received over 350 promises to buy the book. Wilson printed 612 copies
- On July 31, 1786, ***Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*** were published to rapturous acclaim. The book contains some of his best writing: *Twa Dogs, Address to the Diel, Halloween, The Cotter's Saturday Night, To a Mouse, To a Louse, and To a Mountain Daisy*
- The book was an immediate success, selling out within a month. Burns was catapulted into the limelight and the course of his life changed forever
- In the fall, Burns headed to Edinburgh to arrange the publication of a 2nd Edition. The 'Edinburgh edition' appeared in April 1787 and succeeded in establishing Burns' reputation throughout Britain and beyond. Before long versions were printed in London, Dublin, Belfast, Philadelphia & New York



Burns in Love

- Shortly before publishing his first volume of poems Burns, estranged from Jean Armour, who was then unmarried and pregnant, began an affair with Margaret Campbell, later mythologized as 'Highland Mary'
- Burns met Margaret when she worked as a nursemaid for Burns' Lawyer friend, Gavin Hamilton in Mauchline. By spring of 1786, they were probably lovers
- It is possible he intended for Margaret to emigrate to Jamaica with him, but her early death in September 1786 ended any potential plans
- The compelling combination of tragedy and love saw "Highland Mary" eulogized a generation after her death. Her story was romanticized in both print and art throughout the 19th century
- Love and poetry went together for Burns. The most prolific period of his creative life also coincided with one of the most tangled periods in his love life
- In the two years from April 1785 to April 1787 Burns took three lovers, fathered three children, attempted to emigrate to Jamaica with one partner whilst unofficially married to another...and published two enormously successful volumes of poems



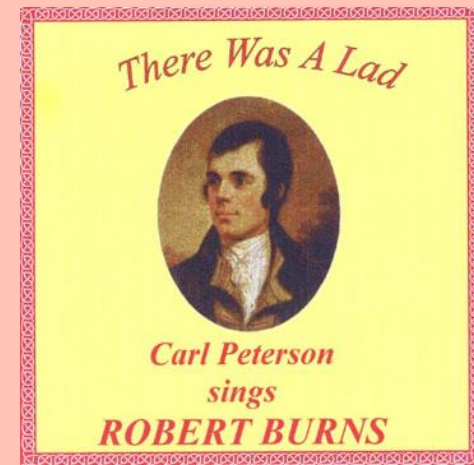
Highland Mary (1792)

Ye banks, and braes, and streams around
The castle o' Montgomery,
Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,
Your waters never drumlie!
There Simmer first unfald her robes,
And there the langest tarry:
For there I took the last Fareweel
O' my sweet Highland Mary.

How sweetly bloom'd the gay, green birk,
How rich the hawthorn's blossom;
As underneath their fragrant shade,
I clasp'd her to my bosom!
The golden Hours, on angel wings,
Flew o'er me and my Dearie;
For dear to me as light and life
Was my sweet Highland Mary.

Wi' mony a vow, and lock'd embrace,
Our parting was fu' tender;
And pledging aft to meet again,
We tore oursels asunder:
But Oh! fell Death's untimely frost,
That nipt my Flower sae early!
Now green's the sod, and cauld's the clay,
That wraps my Highland Mary!

O pale, pale now, those rosy lips,
I aft hae kiss'd sae fondly!
And clos'd for ay the sparkling glance,
That dwalt on me sae kindly!
And mouldering now in silent dust,
That heart that lo'ed me dearly!
But still within my bosom's core
Shall live my Highland Mary.



Carl Peterson
January 1994

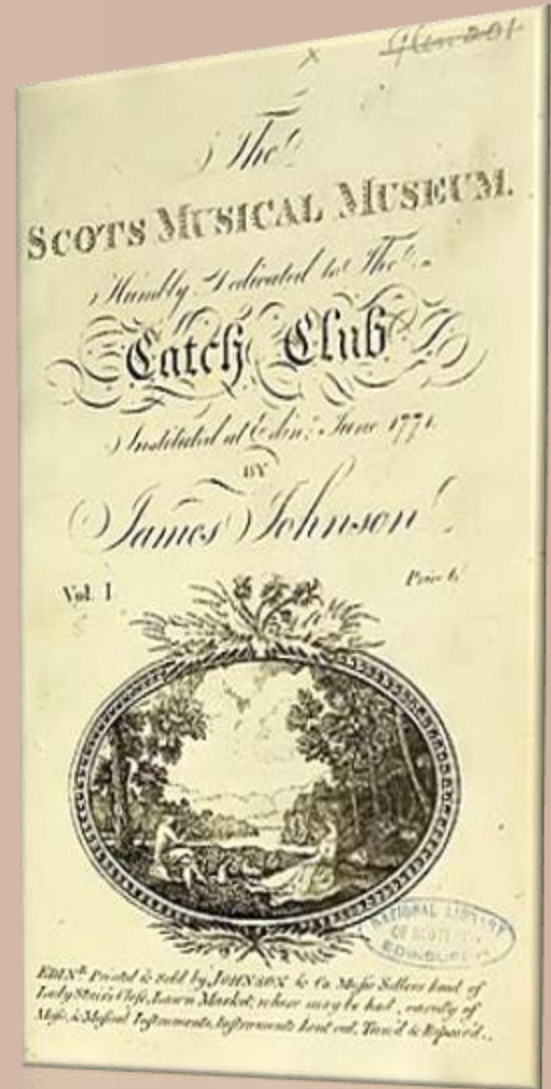
Highland Mary - Discussion

- The song was written by Burns in honor of his lover, Margaret (Mary) Campbell, whom he affectionately called “Highland Mary.” It was written in 1792 several years after her death.
- Robert’s affair with Mary occurred during a period of estrangement from Jean Armour after she had left for Paisley in March 1786, leaving Robert feeling “deserted”.
- In May 1786, Robert and Mary exchanged Bibles and made vows of loyalty to each other by the banks of the River Ayr near Mauchline. Shortly after this, Mary left for her home in the West Highlands to arrange for their marriage and to introduce Burns to her family.
- Mary contracted a fever and died in October 1786, before she and Burns could reunite. Her death profoundly affected Burns, and he commemorated her in several poems and songs, including "*Highland Lassie, O*" and "*Will Ye Go to the Indies My Mary?*", which were written shortly after her death.
- The song is one of Burns’ most poignant and heartfelt works; the lyrics reflecting the deep love Robert held for Mary. The song is tender and nostalgic, capturing the beauty of their brief time together and the profound sense of loss he felt after her untimely death.



Burns the Song Writer

- Burns traveled to Edinburgh in 1786 for the first time to publish the second edition of his poems. While he was there, he met James Johnson (c. 1750-1811), a music engraver and seller with a love of old Scots songs and a determination to preserve them.
- Johnson was about to publish the first volume of his **Scots Musical Museum**, a collection of 100 traditional Scottish songs. Johnson found that Burns shared his interest and would become an enthusiastic contributor
- Burns' collaboration with Johnson inspired him to set him off on a pilgrimage through Scotland in May 1787, traveling to the Borders and later to central Scotland and the Highlands. Burns collected old songs, wrote new words to old tunes, with many songs attributed to Burns having much older roots.
- Many of the songs collected by Burns would later make an appearance in further volumes. Burns refused to accept a fee and Johnson happily accepted Burns' contributions without making significant requests for changes.
- The first volume was published in 1787 and included 3 songs by Burns. He contributed 40 songs to volume 2 and would end up responsible for about 200 of the 600 songs in the whole six volume collection. The final volume was published in 1803 and included the first printing of *Handsome Nell*.



Burns and George Thomson

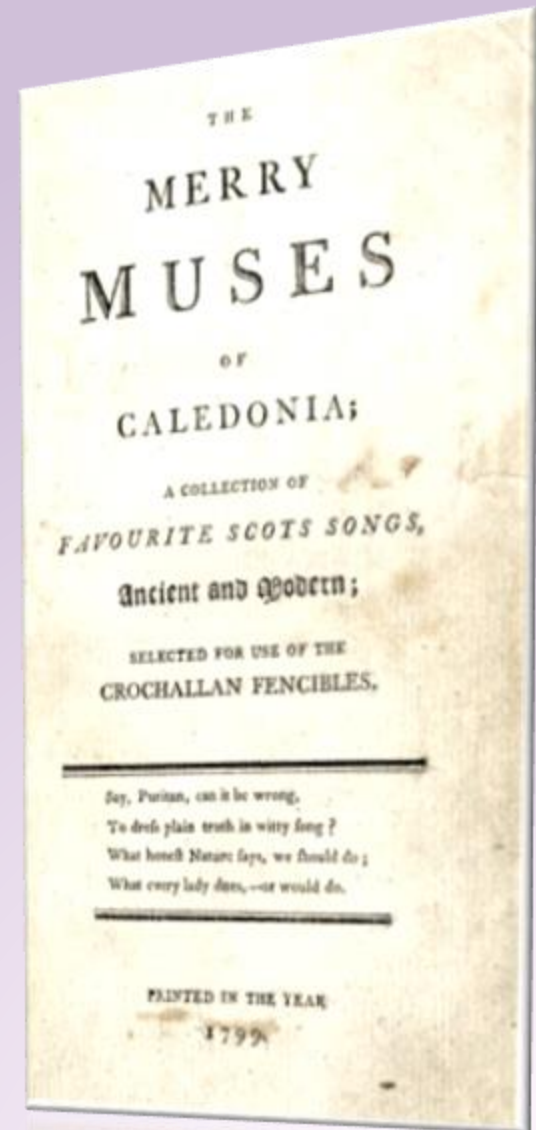
- Burns work on *The Scots Musical Museum* soon earned him the unrivalled position as the national authority on Scottish songs
- In 1792, George Thomson, another collector of songs wrote to Burns telling of his plan to bring out a volume of “the most favorite of our national melodies” and appealed to Burns to write 20 or 25 songs for the collection
- Burns wrote over 160 songs for Thomson’s *A Select Collection of Original Scottish Airs for the Voice*, again without a fee
- Thomson wanted his volumes to be more ‘refined’ and generally chose more classical style music from Europe to accompany the songs
- His editorial approach was also much less relaxed than James Johnson. It is clear from Burns’ correspondence that Thomson was a very involved editor, often suggesting numerous amendments to his submissions
- The first of 5 volumes was published in 1793. Burns continued to send Thomson song after song, although by 1794 his health was becoming a cause for concern.
- Despite this, Burns dedicated much of the last years of his life to collecting and editing traditional songs from around Scotland



George Thomson (1757-1851)
by Henry Raeburn

NSFPS

- Many of the poems and songs collected and edited by Robert Burns had quite bawdy subject matter and language that was not suitable for polite society.
- Being the more relaxed editor, James Johnson would publish modestly risqué versions of songs in ***The Scots Musical Museum*** that were unacceptable to George Thomson; however, some versions were even too much for Johnson.
- Most of the bawdier songs were for private use of Robert Burns and his friends, including the *Crochallan Fencibles*, which was an 18th century convivial men's club that met in a tavern in Edinburgh off High Street, part of the Royal Mile
- Many of these versions found their way into publication in a collection of songs titled ***The Merry Muses of Caledonia***, published posthumously in 1799.
- One song, *The Fornicator*, written in 1785 after the birth of his first illegitimate child with Elizabeth Patton, shows Burns' unwillingness to take seriously the punishment imposed by the Kirk for fornication ("the blissful joy of lovers")
- The collection contains bawdy versions of famous Burns songs including *Dainty Davie*, *Green Grow the Rashes O*, *John Anderson*, *My Jo*, and *Comin' thro' the Rye*
- Next, we will look at three different versions of Burns' *Comin' thro' the Rye*



Comin' thro' the Rye (3 versions)

Scots Musical Museum

Comin thro' the rye, poor body,
Comin thro' the rye,
She draigl't a' her petticoatie,
Comin thro' the rye!

Chorus:

**O, Jenny's a' weet, poor body,
Jenny's seldom dry:
She draigl't a' her petticoatie,
Comin thro' the rye**

Gin a body meet a body
Comin thro' the rye,
Gin a body kiss a body,
Need a body cry?

Gin a body meet a body
Comin thro' the glen
Gin a body kiss a body,
Need the warl' ken?

Gin a body meet a body
Comin thro' the grain;
Gin a body kiss a body,
The thing's a body's ain.

Scottish Airs for Voice

Gin a body meet a body
Comin' thro' the rye
Gin a body kiss a body
Need a body cry?

Chorus:

**Ilka lassie has her laddie
Nane, they say, hae I
Yet a' the lads they smile at me
When comin' thro' the rye.**

Gin a body meet a body
Comin' frae the town
Gin a body kiss a body
Need a body frown?

Gin a body meet a body,
Comin' frae the well,
Gin a body kiss a body,
Need a body tell?

'Mang the train there is a swain
I dearly lo'e myself
But what his name or whaur his hame
I dinna care to tell

Merry Muses of Caledonia (NSFPS)

O gin a body meet a body,
Comin' throu the rye:
Gin a body f--k a body,
Need a body cry.

Chorus:

**Comin' thro' the rye, my jo,
An' coming' thro' the rye;
She fand a staun o' staunin' graith,
Comin' thro' the rye.**

Gin a body meet a body,
Comin' thro' the glen;
Gin a body f--k a body,
Need the warld ken.

Gin a body meet a body,
By a body's sel,
What na body f--ks a body,
Wad a body tell.

Gin a body meet a body,
Comin' thro the grain;
Gin a body f--k a body,
C--t's a body's ain.

Comin' thro' the Rye - Discussion

- *Comin' thro' the Rye* was written in 1782, and the words were put to the melody of the Scottish tune *Common' Frae the Town*.
- In the first, more popular version published in **Scots Musical Museum**, the protagonist, Jenny, is coming from a field of rye, wet from dew or rain, and the effect of her wet dress and undergarment has caught the eye of a male narrator describing various romantic encounters with her in the form of a kiss (or more).
- The second version swaps roles, with (presumably) Jenny being the narrator. In the chorus she notes that while others may comment on her lack of a male partner, she knows how men smile at her coming from the field and imagines her own romantic encounters, admitting in the end to having an unnamed lover.
- While the second version is somewhat tamer than the first, both versions are full of sexual imagery, which in its vagueness lends the song to a variety of different interpretations
- The third, or alternate, version published in the **Merry Muses of Caledonia** leaves little room for interpretation and is quite explicit in the sexual nature of the encounters. It has a different chorus, referring to a phallic “staun o’ staunin’ graith”, and replaces “kiss”, with an overt sexual act.
- The title of the novel, **Catcher in the Rye** by J.D. Salinger comes from the song’s title. In the book, Holden Caulfield, misremembers the line of the poem as “if a body catch a body”, rather than “if a body meet a body”



Love and Marriage

- After the birth of their twins, Robert and Jean Armour continued to live apart. Jean lived with her parents in Mauchline and Robert at Mossgiel Farm.
- Following the success of the The Kilmarnock Edition in 1786, Burns moved temporarily to Edinburgh, but returned intermittently to Mauchline, during which time Jean became pregnant by him again.
- When Burns returned permanently in February 1788, he found Jean was destitute and had been expelled from the family home. They reconciled their relationship, and Burns found her a place to stay.



Jean Armour, 1822
John Alexander Gilfillan

- In early March 1788 Jean went into labor and delivered a second set of twin girls, both tragically dying before the month's end.
- Jean's father, James Armour, eventually relented and allowed his daughter to marry Robert and their marriage was officially registered on August 5, 1788, in Mauchline.
- Jean and Robert moved to Ellisland Farm where they stayed until 1791 when they moved to Dumfries, where both would live for the rest of their lives.
- Robert Burns' relationship with Jean was marked by deep affection but also by significant challenges. Despite Burns' numerous infidelities and their financial struggles, Jean's loyalty and resilience were steadfast. She supported Burns through his turbulent life and played a pivotal role in safeguarding his legacy after his death. Jean Armour died March 26, 1834, age 69.

My Luve is Like a Red, Red Rose (1794)

O my Luve's like a red, red rose,
That's newly sprung in June;
O my Luve's like the melodie
That's sweetly play'd in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonie lass,
So deep in luve am I;
And I will luve 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 luve thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only Luve!
And fare thee weel, a while!
And I will come again, my Luve,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile.

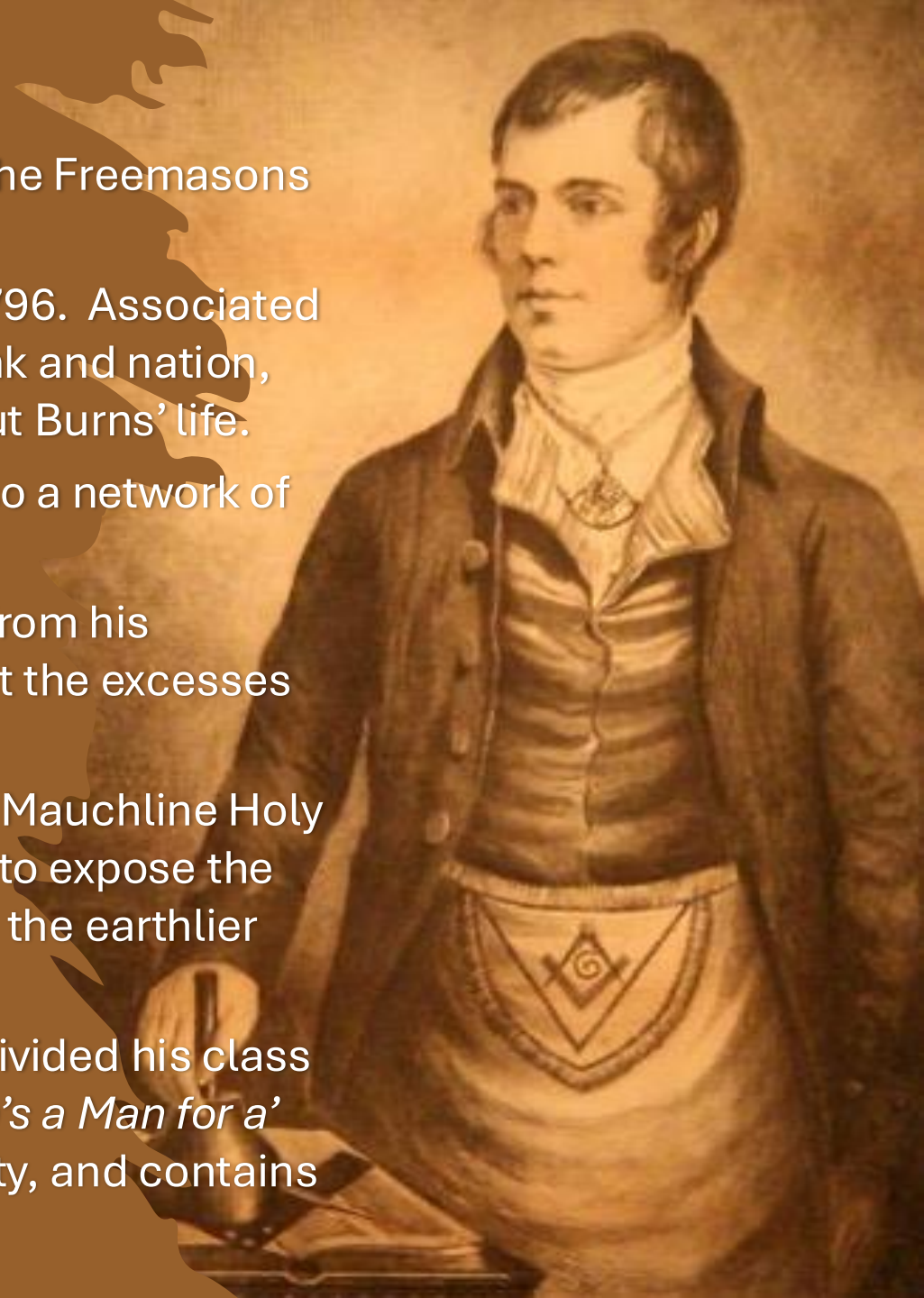


My Luve is Like a Red, Red Rose - Discussion

- First appeared in print in 1794 in a collection of his works and was published posthumously in Johnson's ***Scot's Musical Museum*** in 1797, and later in George Thomson's ***A Select Collection of Original Scottish Airs*** in 1799.
- Johnson and Thomson each selected different fiddle tunes for the song; however, it was another 18th century tune, *Low Down in the Broom*, that became the standard accompaniment to Burns' lyrics
- The song is a declaration of undying love, and one of the most appealing and captivating aspects of the lyric are those places where Burns illustrates the never-ending quality of his love by saying it will last "Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear, / And the rocks melt wi' the sun"
- In just four short stanzas, Burns describes the beauty of his love, and its endurance over both time and distance using simple yet profound language that resonates with people across different cultures
- Over the years, *My Luv is Like a Red, Red Rose* has been translated into many languages, and adapted and performed by countless artists worldwide, spanning genres from classical to folk to contemporary music. Its enduring popularity speaks to its timeless appeal.
- As part of an HMV advertising campaign titled "My Inspiration", Bob Dylan was asked in 2008 to name the lyric that had the most impact on his life. Dylan selected *My Luve is Like a Red, Red Rose*. Dylan's 1997 song about enduring love, *Make You Feel My Love*, is his own tribute to the song

Freemasonry

- On July 4th in 1781, at the age of 22, Burns was initiated into the Freemasons at St David's Lodge in Tarbolton
- Burns remained active in the organization until his death in 1796. Associated with ideas of brotherhood that overstepped boundaries of rank and nation, Freemasonry would prove to be an influential force throughout Burns' life.
- Not only did it offer him an outlet and system of belief, but also a network of friends and connections helpful in furthering his career
- Burns' commitment to the ideals of the Enlightenment came from his association with Freemasonry, and he often spoke out against the excesses of the secular, as well as religious establishment
- In 1785 he wrote *The Holy Fair*, which is a poem based on the Mauchline Holy Fair, a twice-yearly religious gathering. Burns used the poem to expose the hypocrisy of the moral tug-o-war between Kirk teachings and the earthlier pleasures of drinking and "houghmagandie" (fornication)
- Burns was also acutely aware of the social distinctions that divided his class from the wealthy landowners and merchants. His song *A Man's a Man for a' That*, is famous for its expression of egalitarian ideas of society, and contains references to Masonic ideals of brotherhood



A Man's a Man for a' That (1795)

Is there for honest poverty
That hings his head, an a' that
The coward slave, we pass him by
We dare be poor for a' that!
For a' that, and a' that,
Our toils obscure, an a' that
The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
The man's the gowd 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, and a' that
Their tinsel show, an a' that
The honest man, tho e'er sae poor,
Is king o men for a' that.

Ye see yon birkie ca'd a lord,
Wha struts, and stares, an a' that?
Tho hundreds worship at his word,
He's but a coof for a' that.
For a' that, an a' that,
His ribband, star, an a' that,
The man o independent mind,
He looks and laughs at a' that

A prince can mak a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, an a' that!
But an honest man's aboon his might
Guid faith, he mauna fa' that!
For a' that, an a' that
Their dignities, an a' that
The pith o sense and pride o worth,
Are higher rank than a' that

Then let us pray that come it may
As come it will for a' that,
That Sense and Worth o'er a'
the earth
Shall bear the gree an a' that.
For a' that, an a' that,
It's comin yet for a' that,
That man to man, the world o'er
Shall brithers be for a' that

***A Man's a Man for a' That* – Discussion**

- *A Man's a Man for A' That* is one of Robert Burns' most celebrated songs. Written in 1795 and published anonymously in the August edition of the *Glasgow Magazine*, a radical monthly. Thomson later included it in the 4th volume of ***Select Collection of Original Scottish Airs***.
- The song was written during a time of significant social and political change. The ideals of the Enlightenment and the American and French Revolutions were influencing thoughts on liberty, equality, and fraternity. Burns, known for his radical views and sympathy for these movements, used his poetry to voice his support for social justice and human rights.
- The lyrics reflect Burns' belief in the inherent dignity and worth of every individual, regardless of social status or wealth. Burns begins by criticizing the notion that poverty is something to be ashamed of and emphasizes that true worth is determined by character and integrity, not by symbols of rank or status
- In the final stanza, Burns expresses hope for a future where sense and worth prevail globally, and all people recognize their shared humanity and equality, ideals very much aligned with Masonic principles
- *A Man's a Man for A' That* has become an anthem for equality and human rights and is often sung at events promoting social justice. It was famously performed by Scottish folk singer Sheena Wellington at the opening of the Scottish Parliament in May 1999, symbolizing Scotland's commitment to egalitarian principles.



Burns and Jacobitism

- Burns was widely viewed as sympathetic to Jacobitism, a political movement that sought to restore the Stuart kings to the thrones of England, Scotland, and Ireland from 1689 to 1745
- Burns was also famous for his egalitarian and republican views, which were seemingly at odds with the restoration of an absolutist monarchy.
- Burns view of the Jacobite cause was very much romanticized; he saw it primarily as a symbol of Scottish nationalism. His sympathies were less political in nature and more an expression of nostalgic regret for the loss of Scottish sovereignty, as symbolized by the defeat of the royal Stewart line, with its origins dating back to Robert the Bruce.
- Burns admired the ideals of liberty and equality, influenced by the American and French Revolutions, so he distanced himself from the basic tenant of Jacobitism, namely the "Divine Right of Kings"
- His diverse views on Jacobitism were reflected in the diversity of Jacobite related themes in his songs and poems.
- Burns wrote over 20 Jacobite songs including *Killiecrankie*, *The Battle of Sherramuir*, *It was A' for Our Righthfu' King*, *Ye Jacobites by Name*, and *Charlie He's My Darling*



Prince Charles Edward Stuart
in Armour
Jean-Marc Nattier (1685-1766)

Charlie He's My Darling (1796)

Twass on a Monday morning,
Right early in the year,
When Charlie came to our town
The Young Chevalier.

Chorus: An' Charlie he's my darling,
My darling, my darling;
Charlie, he's my darling,
The young Chevalier!

As he was walking up the street,
The city for to view,
O there he spied a bonnie lass
The window looking through,

Sae light's he jumped up the stair,
And tirl'd at the pin;
And wha sae ready as hersel'
To let the laddie in.

Twass on a Monday morning,
Right early in the year,
When Charlie came to our town
The Young Chevalier.

Chorus: Charlie is my darling,
My darling, my darling;
Charlie is my darling,
The young Chevalier!

As he cam' marchin' up the street,
The pipes played loud and clear.
And a' the folk cam' rinnin' out
To meet the Chevalier.

Wi' highland bonnets on their heads
And claymores bright and clear,
They cam' to fight for Scotland's right
And the young Chevalier.

He set his Jenny on his knee,
All in his Highland dress;
For brawly weel he ken'd the way
To please a bonnie lass.

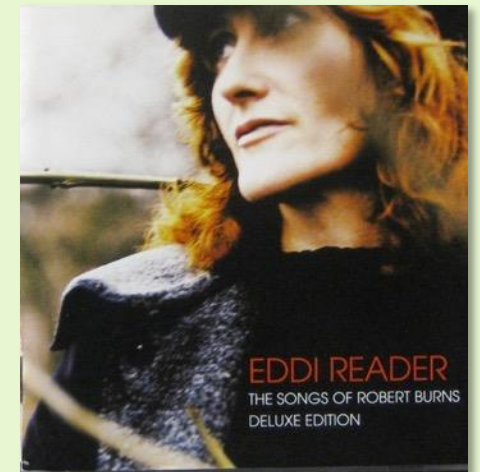
It's up yon heathery mountain,
An' down yon scroggie glen,
We daur na gang a milking,
For Charlie and his men.

They've left their bonnie highland hills,
Their wives and bairnies dear,
To draw the sword for Scotland's lord,
The young Chevalier.

Oh, there were many beating hearts,
And mony a hope and fear,
And mony were the pray'rs put up,
For the young Chevalier.

Comparison of the Robert Burns version and version by James Hogg (1770-1835)

Eddi Reader
Deluxe Edition January 2009



Charlie He's My Darling - Discussion

- This song is a reworking by Burns of a song that he collected. Given the subject, the original was likely composed sometime after 1745. Burns' version appears in ***Scots Musical Museum*** Volume 5 in 1796, No. 428 just prior to Robert Burns' death
- The song is probably based on Charles Edward Stuart's occupation of Edinburgh in the fall of 1744, despite the song taking place 'right early in the year'
- Jacobite sentiment of the song is unmistakable, as would be expected of any song with "Charlies he's my Darling" for a title. The song makes references to Charlie's 'Highland Dress' and is quite romantic in its portrayal of him, dashing up the stairs to be with a 'bonnie lass'
- *Charlie is My Darling* is the title of several traditional Scots songs. The version by James Hogg shown here and another later version by Charles Gray (1782-1851), also feature a romanticized depiction of Prince Charlie, but in a much more patriotic and nationalistic vein. Burns' take on the song focuses more on Prince Charlie's reputation as a womanizer.
- It also counters the more effeminate depictions of Bonnie Prince Charlie in the centuries since the '45. His manliness here is also unmistakable, 'For brawlie weel he ken'd the way/to please a bonnine lass'



Burns the Patriot



- Burns wrote about Scotland as a place to be celebrated and sometimes he also saw his country suffering from injustice in the context of its Union with England
- A strong strand of anti-Scottish prejudice followed the Union of Parliaments in 1707, which was evident in the English attitudes towards everyday Scottish customs such as diet.
- His poem *To a Haggis* was a response to the prejudice that Scotland had little in the way of resources, and made the point that simple, nutritious food is what counts, and that it is this type of food that bred Scotland's hardy warriors
- This sense of injustice and prejudice was a major driving force behind Burns' patriotism, with his most celebrated displays coming in his engagement with William Wallace and Robert the Bruce, icons in the 13th and 14th century Scottish Wars of Independence with England
- In a letter to Frances Dunlop, descendent of William Wallace, Burns writes of the story of her ancestor, which '*poured a Scottish prejudice in my veins which will boil along there till the flood-gates of life shut in eternal rest.*'

Scots Wha Hae (1793)

(Bruce's Address to his Army at Bannockburn)

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led,
Welcome to your gory bed
— Or to Victorie!

Now's the day, and now's the hour;
See the front o' battle lour;
See approach proud Edward's power —
Chains and Slaverie!

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave
Let him turn and flie!

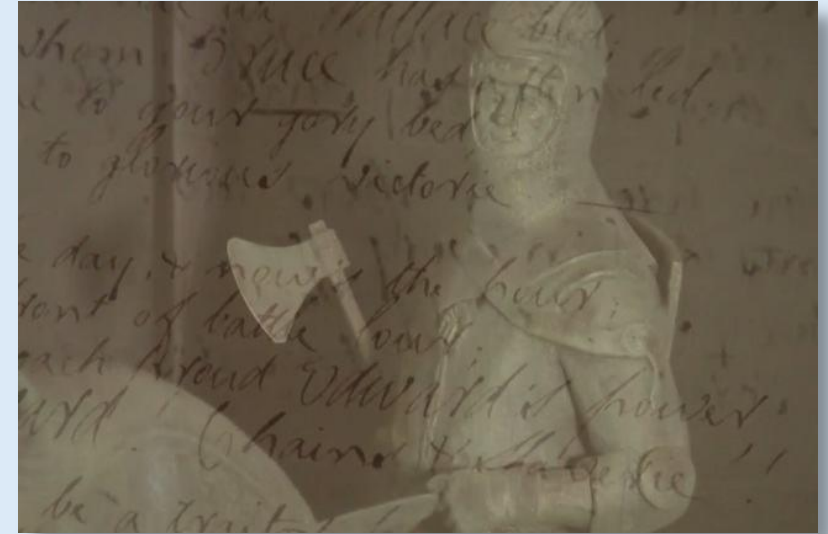
Wha for Scotland's king and law,
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Freeman stand or Freeman fa'
Let him follow me!

By Oppression's woes and pains!
By your sons in servile chains!
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they *shall* be free!

Lay the proud usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty's in every blow!
Let us do — or die!

Scots Wha Hae - Discussion

- *Scots Wha Hae*, or *Bruce's Address to his Troops* is one of Burns' most well-known patriotic songs.
- The song is written from the perspective of Robert the Bruce who addresses his men before the Battle of Bannockburn (1314).
- The rousing anthem celebrates the famous battle in which the Scots under Bruce's command won a decisive victory against the forces of England's King Edward II in the First War of Independence.
- The song was sent to George Thomson in 1793, although he didn't publish it until 1799. Burns set the lyrics to the tune of *Hey Tuttie Tattie*, an old drinking song that was purportedly sung by the army of Robert the Bruce before the Battle of Bannockburn.
- When writing this song, Burns deliberately associated Bruce's fight for freedom with contemporary politics in the wake of the French Revolution in 1789. The song shows Burns as both a Scots patriot and well as one associated with radical sympathies at a time of revolution and fight for reform.
- *Scots Wha Hae* is the official song of the Scottish National Party and in the past was sung at the close of their annual national conference each year. It also served until 1958 as an unofficial national anthem of Scotland and was played during the Commonwealth Games (1930-1958); however, it has been largely supplanted by *Scotland the Brave* (1958-2010) and *Flower of Scotland* (2010 to present).



Burns the Exciseman

- After Robert and Jean's marriage in March 1788, Burns took out a lease on Ellisland Farm in Dumfriesshire, settling there in June.
- Despite his growing fame as a poet, Burns struggled to make a stable living, and the income from farming was insufficient. He needed a reliable source of income to support his family
- In 1788, Burns applied for and secured a position as an exciseman, collecting taxes on various goods, including alcohol, which was a significant source of revenue for the government. The job was demanding requiring long hours, extensive travel, and meticulous record-keeping.
- His duties included inspecting premises, checking for illegal distillation, seizing contraband, and ensuring taxes were properly paid. The work was often hazardous, as smuggling was rampant and excisemen were not typically welcomed by the locals.
- The job provided Burns with a steady income of £50 per year, nearly twice the average of the time, which was crucial for his family's financial stability; however, it also took a toll on his health and limited his time for writing.
- In 1791 Burns moved his family from Ellisland Farm to Dumfries where he continued his work as an exciseman until his death in 1796

Smugglers, George Morland (c. 1800)

The Deil's Awa wi' the Exciseman (1792)

The deil cam fiddlin' thro' the town,
And danc'd awa wi' th' Exciseman;
And ilka wife cries, Auld Mahoun,
I wish you luck o' the prize, man.

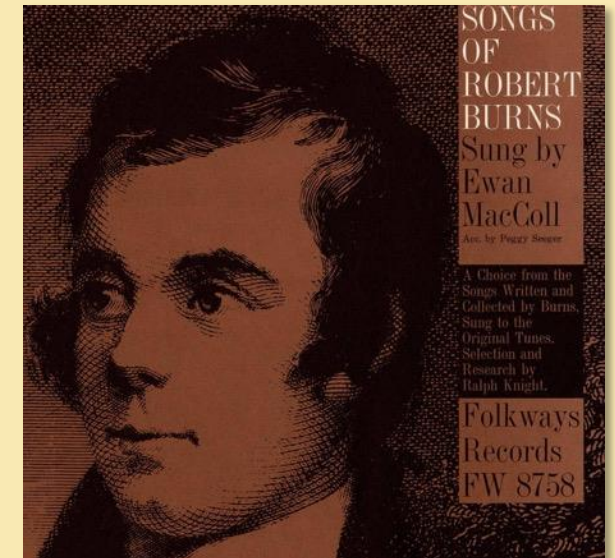
There's threesome reels, there's foursome reels,
There's hornpipes and strathspeys, man,
But the ae best dance ere came to the Land
Was, the deil's awa wi' the Exciseman.

Chorus

***The deil's awa the deil's awa,
The deil's awa wi' the Exciseman,
He's danc'd awa he's danc'd awa
He's danc'd awa wi' the Exciseman.***

We'll mak our maut, and we'll brew our drink,
We'll laugh, sing, and rejoice, man;
And mony braw thanks to the meikle black deil,
That danc'd awa wi' th' Exciseman..

Ewan MacColl
April 1959



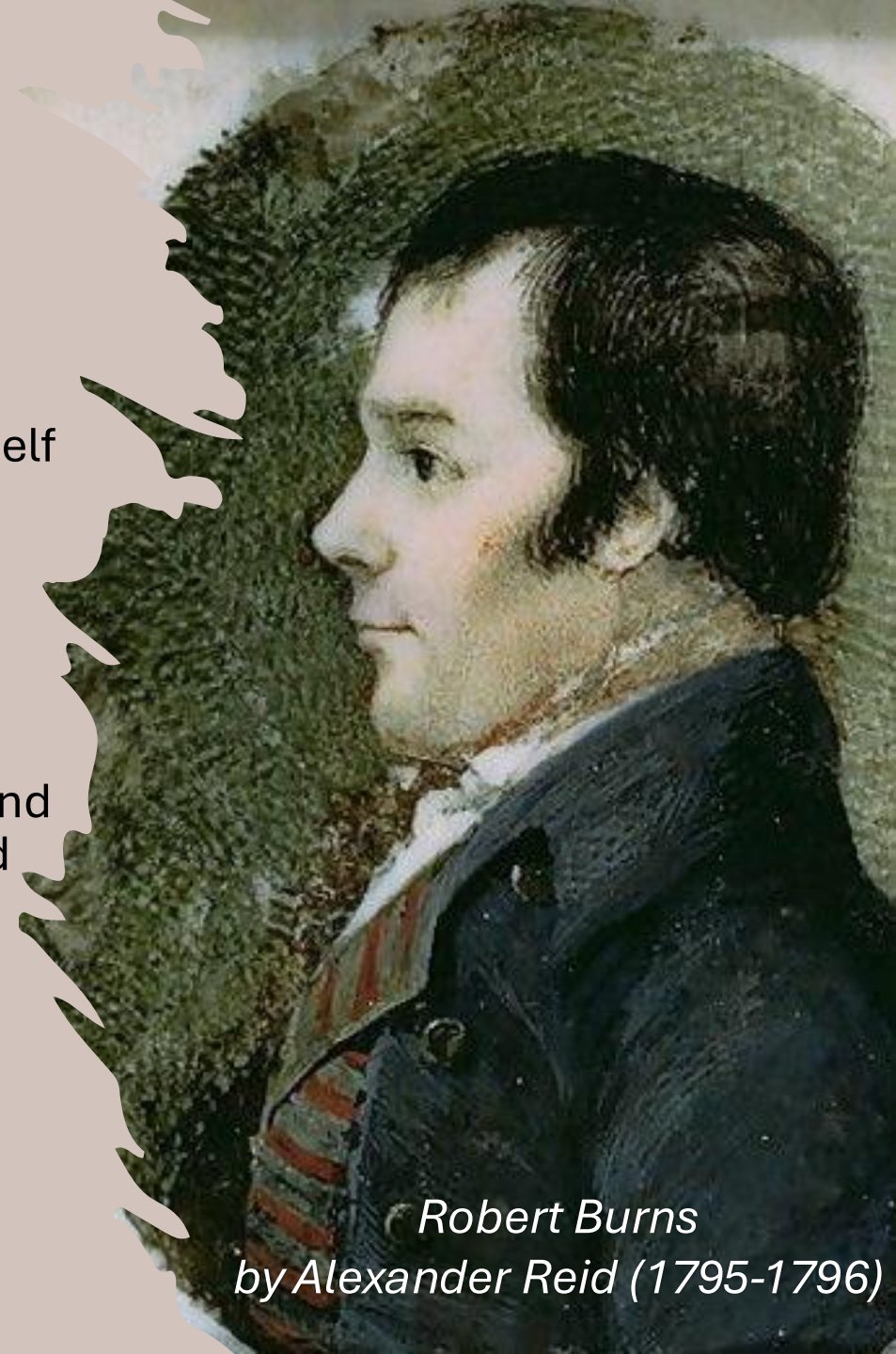
The Deil's Awa wi' the Exciseman - Discussion

- *The Deil's Awa wi' the Exciseman* was written in 1792 and first appeared in Johnson's **Scots Musical Museum** the same year.
- The song is a satirical take on the unpopular Scottish excise system, which was responsible for collecting taxes on goods such as alcohol and tobacco.
- While Burns' work as an exciseman was a financial necessity for his family, he was far from enthusiastic about the role, as the excise taxes he collected disproportionately affected the poor and working class, the very people he championed in his writing.
- The song tells the story of the devil taking away an exciseman and the resulting revelry of the community. The devil, who is typically associated with sin and evil, is portrayed as a hero in the song, while the exciseman, who represents the government and its oppressive policies, is seen as the villain.
- This inversion of traditional religious roles is a commentary on both the hypocrisy of those in power in the government and the kirk, as well as on the power dynamics between the ruling class and the common people, and the potential for resistance and rebellion against unjust systems.



Illness and Death

- By 1795 Burns' health had deteriorated badly. The death of his daughter Elizabeth in September appeared to deepen his depression and during the winter he became increasingly unwell
- As his health worsened, Burns was sent by his doctor to Brow, where, in an attempt to relieve his symptoms, he immersed himself in the freezing waters of the Solway Firth.
- Only a few weeks later, on July 21, 1796, the 'Heaven taught ploughman' turned 'Caledonia's Bard' died at the age of 37. He was buried in the graveyard of St. Michael's Church in Dumfries with full military honors.
- There has been much speculation as to the cause of his death, and people have blamed alcohol, sexually transmitted diseases, lead poisoning, and tuberculosis. Some conspiracy theorists even blamed the British government based on his radicalism
- Experts now think that Burns died from heart disease, probably endocarditis, either as a complication of rheumatic fever, which Burns may have contracted as a teenager while working in the fields, or possibly due to a tooth abscess as he suffered with a toothache during the last year of his life.



*Robert Burns
by Alexander Reid (1795-1796)*

The Immortal Memory

- In the years following Burns' death several different memoirs were published on his life, which portrayed him anywhere from a drunken womanizer to a flawed genius whose weakness for drink brought him to an early grave
- In 1851, Robert Chambers' ***Life and Works of Robert Burns*** was published which helped shake off some of the more negative stereotypes, and instead asserted that he was one of the greatest "poetical spirits". This was the first biography to recognize the universal appeal of his work.
- The first Burns Supper was held in memoriam at Burns Cottage in Alloway by Burns' friends on July 21, 1801, the 5th anniversary of his death.
- The first Burns Club was also founded in 1801 in Greenock by merchants who were born in Ayrshire. They held the first Burns Supper on what they thought was his birthday on January 29, 1802. They didn't discover his actual birthday on the 25th until 1803, and it has been a regular occurrence on or about that date ever since
- Robert Burns is Scotland's national poet, embodying the spirit and identity of the Scottish people, but his influence extends beyond Scotland as his themes of common humanity and social justice resonate with people worldwide
- Burns' enduring popularity is extraordinary with his song *Auld Lang Syne* sung by millions around the world every year on New Year's Eve



Auld Lang Syne

- Sung at New Year the world over, *Auld Lang Syne* is arguably the most recognizable and most performed of all Burns' songs. Written in 1788 but based on an older Scottish folk song that Burns collected on his travels through Scotland and reworked.
- The literal translation of song's title is "old long since", or less literally as "days gone by" or "times long past". The song's verses speak of shared experiences and the passage of time and distance, while the chorus calls for raising a cup to toast those memories.
- *Auld Lang Syne* was first published in 1796 in Johnson's **Scots Musical Museum** with the accompanying music based on the preferred tune originally proffered by Burns.
- George Thomson also published the song in his **Collection of Original Scottish Airs** in 1799, nearly three years after Burns' death with different music. This is the most familiar version sung today.
- The song quickly became popular in Scotland and was sung at various gatherings, particularly at the end of social events. Scottish immigrants spread the song to other parts of the world.
- The song became associated with New Year's Eve thanks in part to bandleader Guy Lombardo, whose orchestra played it at the annual New Year's Eve broadcasts in New York City from the 1920's onward. His version became a standard, cementing the song's place in New Year's celebrations worldwide.
- The enduring popularity of *Auld Lang Syne* is a testament to its ability to capture the bittersweet nature of endings and new beginnings, making it a timeless piece of our shared cultural heritage.

Auld Lang Syne (1788)

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And auld lang syne!

Chorus

***For auld lang syne, my jo,
For auld lang syne;
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.***

And surely ye'll be your pint-stoup,
And surely I'll be mine;
And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.

We twa hae run about the braes,
And pou'd the gowans fine;
But we've wander'd mony a weary fitt,
Sin' auld lang syne.

We twa hae paidl'd in the burn,
Frae morning sun till dine;
But seas between us braid hae roar'd
Sin' auld lang syne.

And there's a hand, my trusty fiere!
And gie's a hand o' thine!
And we'll tak a right guid-willie waught,
For auld lang syne!



**Thomson, *A Collection of
Original Scottish Airs* (1799)**



**Johnson, *The Scots Musical
Museum* (1796)**



the Museum — I had a horse, & I had nae mair:
It is a charming song, & I know the story of
the Ballad.

One song more, & I have done — Auld lang syne
The air is but mediocre, but the following song, the
old song of the older times, & which has never been
in print, not even in manuscript, until I took it
down from an old man's singing, is enough to
recommend any girl.

End

Auld lang syne
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And days o' lang syne!

Chorus

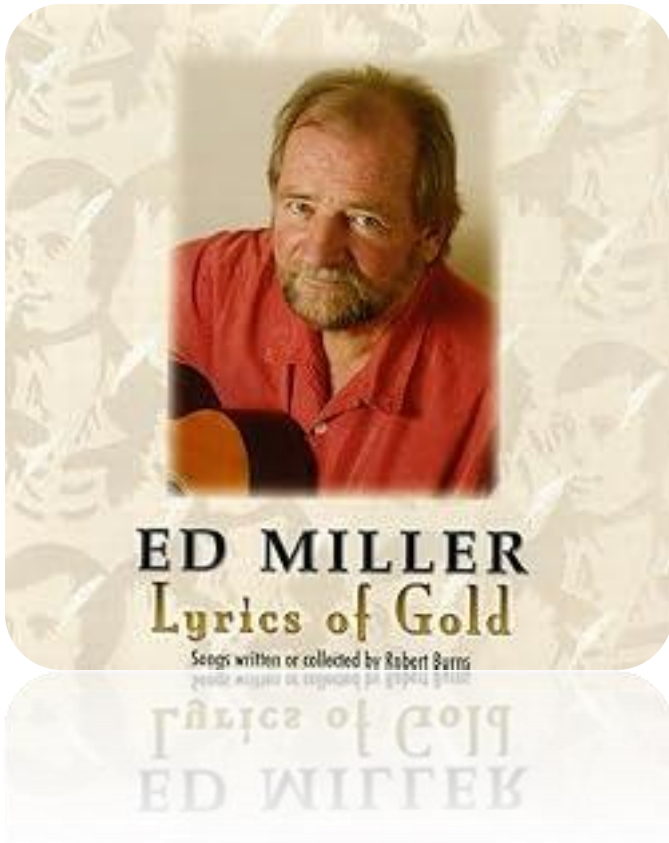
For auld lang syne, my Dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne

The twa hae run about the trees,

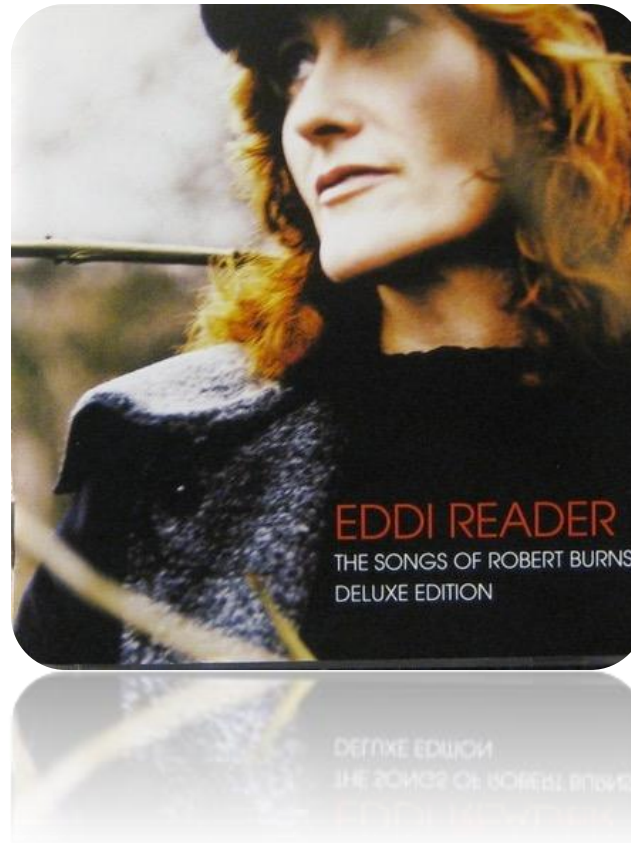
Suggested Listening



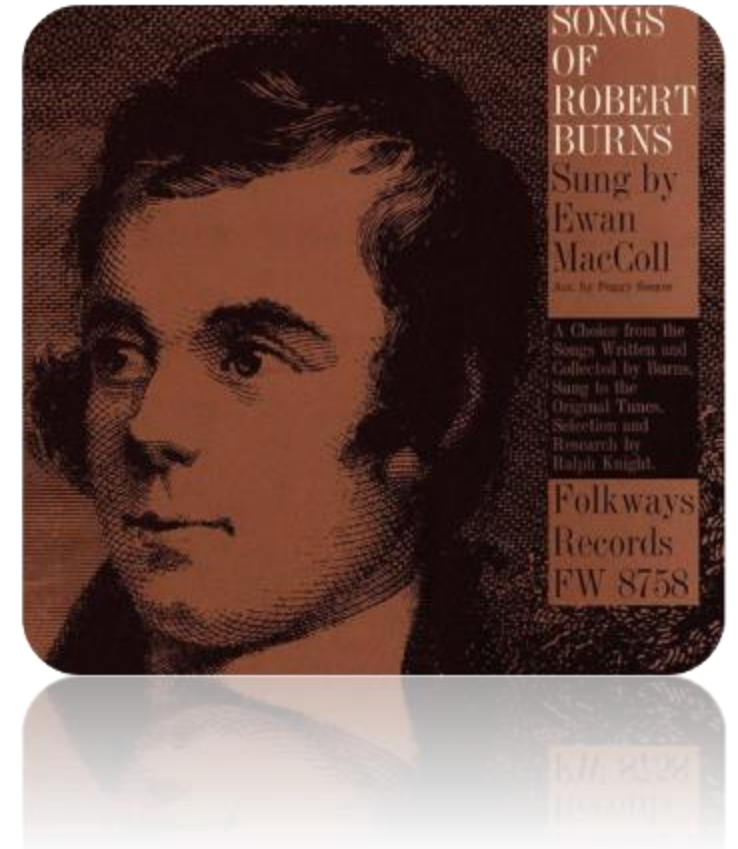
Ed Miller
Lyrics of Gold
January 2008



Eddi Reader
The Songs of Robert Burns
Deluxe Edition January 2009

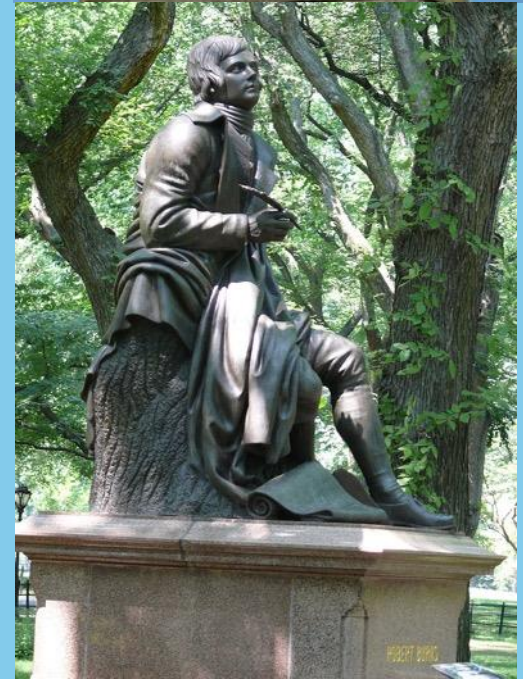


Ewan MacColl
Songs of Robert Burns
April 1959



Legacy: Robert Burns Memorials

- After Queen Victoria and Christopher Columbus, Robert Burns has more statues and memorials dedicated to him around the world today than any other non-religious figure.
- Countries with the greatest number of (known) public memorials include
 - Scotland – 27
 - United States – 16 (including Detroit)
 - Australia – 8
 - Canada – 8
 - New Zealand - 4
 - England – 3
- Some of the most visited ones include:
 - Burns Monument in Alloway
 - Burns Statue in Dumfries
 - Burns Monument and Gardens in Kilmarnock
 - Statue in Central Park, New York
- These memorials are a lasting testament to Burns' legacy and his impact on Scottish culture, literature, and song.



The Rigs o' Barley (Corn Rigs) (1783)

It was upon a Lammas night,
When corn-rigs are bonny,
Beneath the moon's unclouded light
I held awa to Annie:
The time flew by, wi' tentless heed,
Till 'tween the late and early;
Wi' sma' persuasion she agreed
To see me thro' the barley.

Chorus: *Corn-rigs, and barley-rigs,
And corn-rigs are bonny:
I'll ne'er forget that happy night,
Amang the rigs wi' Annie.*

The sky was blue, the wind was still,
The moon was shining clearly,
I set her down, wi' right gude-will,
Amang the rigs o' barley.
I kent her heart was a' my ain;
I lov'd her most sincerely:
I kiss'd her o'er and o'er again,
Amang the rigs o' barley.

I lock'd her in my fond embrace;
Her heart was beatin' rarely;
My blessing on that happy place,
Amang the rigs o' barley.
But by the moon and stars so bright,
That shone that hour sae clearly.
She aye shall bless that happy night,
Amang the rigs o' barley.

I hae been blythe wi' comrades dear,
I hae been merry drinkin',
I hae been joyfu' gath'rin gear,
I hae been happy thinkin';
But a' the pleasures e'er I saw,
Tho' three times doubled fairly,
That happy night was worth them a',
Amang the rigs o' barley.