

# The South East Essex Scottish Society

News Letter April 2014

## **Burns' Nicht – 2014**

Seventy Eight members and guests celebrated Burns Nicht at Rayleigh Grange Community Centre, Little Wheatley on Saturday the 1<sup>st</sup> of February.

At the top table was the Mayor of Southend on Sea, Councillor Brian Kelly accompanied by his wife Mrs Ann Kelly, our President Mr. Keith Wilson with his wife Mrs, Christine Wilson. Representing the North Country Association Miss Janice Flick accompanied by Miss Elaine Gibbs. Our Piper for the evening was Mr. Bob Dobney with his wife Mrs Mary Dobney. Completing the top table was our Vice President and Toast Master Mr. Ray Helliar accompanied by Mrs Valerie Helliar

The top table guests were welcomed in to the hall by all the assembled guests as Bob Dobney piped them to their seats.

The Procession of the Haggis was lead by Bob Dobney followed by the assistant Chef carrying two crossed bottles' of whisky, followed by the Chef carrying The Haggis followed by Mr. Graham Easton.

Graham addressed the Haggis with great gusto. Graham started his address with his small sgian dubh but finished the address brandishing a ceremonial 12 inch Highland Dirk!

After an excellent meal, of Haggis, Neeps and Tatties, a main course of Confit of Duck in a spiced Plum Sauce and a traditional Scottish sweet Raspberry Cranachan. our President Keith Wilson welcomed our guests to our Burns evening and Councillor Brian Kelly made an appropriate response on behalf of the guests.

The main speaker for the evening was Mrs. Christine Wilson, who gave an excellent toast to the Immortal Memory of Robert Burns. Christine started her toast by saying that when she was first asked if she would like to give the Immortal Memory for Robert Burns she wondered what a mere female Sassenach, who has not actually read that much of Burns poems or works could add to his Memory?

I have now had the privilege of reading Christine's nine pages of notes on Robert Burns and can confirm that she has now read and more importantly understood why Burns is Scotland's National Poet.

Christine said " Burns' attitude to women has been variously described as a charmer, a Casanova and a bit of a "Jack the Lad" and perhaps he was some of those things, but in reality he did not just love women for their allure, he loved women for their strength of character, intelligence and for the friendship that they gave him. **He recognised women as equal beings long before it became fashionable to do so."**

What was certainly unusual for the time is that it would appear that Burns looked upon all the children he fathered as his own and not just the mother's responsibility. He even celebrated the birth of a love-child in a poem that must have scandalised the respectable church-goers which begins: "Thou's welcome, wean." ("You are welcome, child.").

His views on Women's rights were clearly set out in in a Poem written by him called The Rights of Woman, The first verse reads:

"While Europe's eye is fix'd on mighty things,  
The fate of Empires and the fall of Kings;  
While quacks of State must each produce his plan  
And even children lisp the Rights of Man;  
Amid this mighty fuss just let me mention,  
**The Rights of Woman merit some attention!"**

Christine finished her speech with reference to the last verse of "Is There for Honest Poverty"

"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 brothers be for a' that.**

After a short break the evening's dancing, "organised" by our two MC's Graham Easton and Archie Mackay, got underway

The dances were enthusiastically performed by members and guests, many of whom had taken the trouble to come along to our Friday Evening dancing at St Peter's Church Hall to ensure that they would be able to join in the dancing. **It was indeed a lively Burns' Nicht.**

### **Family Evening 15<sup>th</sup> March 2014**

Due to a lack of numbers of children signed up for this annual event it was decided by the organisers that this year's Family Evening should be cancelled

### **The 60<sup>th</sup> Essex Caledonian Ball**

This year's Ball was held at the Blackshots Civic Centre at Grays on the **5<sup>th</sup> of April 2014**. The organising Society was Witham and District The music for the evening was provided by the Craigievar Scottish Dance Band . Jeans Caterers again supplied the meal. There were 117 dancers in attendance. This number was down on previous Essex Caledonian Balls, however it did mean that there was plenty of room to dance. As is normal with the Caledonian Ball there are a limited number of raffle prizes, and out of 117 dancers our Society members still managed to win two of them

### **Dates for Your Diary**

#### **Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2014 Spring Dance**

St Peter's Church Hall, Eastbourne Grove, Westcliff on Sea SS0 0QF  
The Programmes for the Spring Dance are now available.

#### **Tom Craig's London Walk.**

Tom Craig has given two possible dates for his London Walk : the **11<sup>th</sup> May** or **18<sup>th</sup> May**.  
A notice is now up on the Society Notice Board listing the two dates. Any member planning to join this annual walk should add their name under the most suitable date for them. If you are free for both dates. Enter your name under each date.

#### **Annual General Meeting**

The Society's AGM will take place on **Friday 16<sup>th</sup> of May at 7.30pm** St Peter's Church Hall, Eastbourne Grove, Westcliff on Sea SS0 0QF

### **Friday 30<sup>th</sup> May ( Last Dancing Night )**

A "**Bring and Buy**" will be held at St Peter's Church Hall, The proceeds from this will go to this year's Charity - The Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen's Families Association Southend District and Rochford District

### **A Summer Walk on Hadleigh Downs**

Alan and Edna Corroll are arranging a walk on Hadleigh downs on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June starting at their house at 2pm and finishing about 4 to 4.30pm at their home. A notice has been put on the board. Please add your Name on the notice to assist Alan and Edna to know how many are coming. Bring a garden chair and some food for shared refreshments, after the walk

### **Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> July Belfairs Pith & Putt**

The competition will start at 1.30pm. A notice is on the Society Notice Board, Please add your Name if you intend to come along. You can bring your own Pitching Wedge and Putter, or clubs can be hired at the Starter Hut. There is a charge for the round, which is the same whether you hire or use your own clubs

### **Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> July**

On the evening of Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> July at 5pm, Christine Wilson and Keith are having a gathering in their garden, and again there is a notice on the Board. Add your Name if you are going to attend. If possible bring a garden chair with you

### **The Society's Charity Dance**

Jean Mackay is again organising a Charity Dance for the Society's nominated Charity at **St. Peter's Church Hall, Eastbourne Grove, Westcliff-on-Sea on Saturday, 13<sup>th</sup> September 2014**

The Charity this year will be **in aid of S.S.A.F.A** Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association. Southend, Rochford & District

### **Society News**

Any member who has news that they think could be included in the next newsletter should contact Archie Mackay or e-mail to [ajr.mackay@btinternet.com](mailto:ajr.mackay@btinternet.com)