

Dance On!



A Robert Burns Celebration

**Newcastle Festival
Letters, Reviews and Dances
Highland Highlights**

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Issue 49**

A Robert Burns Celebration



The Tam O' Shanter Dancers



An Unco Sight



Village Maids



Drummer Mackenzie & Piper White



The Town Crier



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By Cheryl Jorgensen



Once again the Tam O' Shanter Dancers of White Rock BC hosted a Robert Burns Celebration that was an evening extraordinaire. Set in the town market square, their message rang loud and clear that, "to preserve our culture, history and tradition, we must encourage the younger generation to participate and thus feel proud of their ancestry".

The 18th Century town square entertainment opened to the haunting Scottish airs played on recorder by twelve-year-old Connor Page, as he stood under the Mercat Cross. Village children followed, skipping, playing games, including the gird and cleek, dancing and filling the square with activity. Nine-year-old Calum Lyon provided some lively fiddle music for the girls' special dance. Flower ladies distributed their rose and heather posies to the ladies, a fish monger peddled her fish, and a street cleaner swept with her heather broom. In the background patrons of The Tam O' Shanter Inn quite visibly enjoyed their own brand of entertainment. Ted White

drew the children around him as he tuned up his small pipes, sitting on a bench.

The Town Crier, Kyle Mitchell, resplendent in appropriate costume, made his dramatic entrance by the Burns Monument, to proclaim the news of the day and to announce proceedings. He drew attention to the history of his profession and to the value of involving the younger generation in every aspect of their culture. He called on eleven-year-old MacKenzie Balakrishnan to recite "Up in the Morning Early". From poetry to the song Afton Water sung by Patrick MacLeod. As the spotlight moved to a

beautiful six foot replica of the Iona Cross, Kyle referred to the ancient art work, and how the intricate circles, crosses, squares and stars were symbols that communicated the Gospel to the illiterate of the time. The Tam O' Shanter Dancers danced the Strathspey and Reel Medley "The Iona Cross", devised by John W. Mitchell.

The Town Crier followed with reflections on the Muse of Burns, particularly his ability to rouse one's emotion and spirit through his own love of all things great and small, as he expressed in his poem To a Mouse, when he felt great distress over his destruction of the mouse's nest, and also in his poem To a Mountain Daisy when he crushed the "wee modest crimson-tipped flow'r". A tribute in verse to Burns by Alexander McLachlan, and the traditional toast concluded the Immortal Memory.

Patrick MacLeod's selection of songs included a very rousing rendition of Scots Wha Hae, delivered from The Tam O' Shanter Inn with much enthusiastic support from within. Ted White re-appeared



in the square, this time in RCMP uniform playing his large pipes, followed closely by three-year-old Ethan Hunt enthusiastically beating his toy drum, and the rest of the children in quick pursuit.

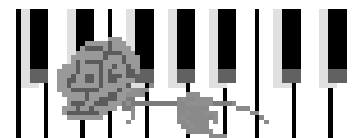
The next scene portrayed the Edinburgh society where Burns enjoyed the literary elite and where he met his great love, Clarinda. In period costumes, the Tam O' Shanter Dancers performed the beautiful strathspey, "Clarinda", a dance representing the couple's many meetings and partings. This was a small glimpse into the ballrooms of the past, accompanied by the beautiful music of the Galloway area. Patrick McLeod followed, singing a new arrangement of "Ae Fond Kiss", Burns' most beautiful love song to Clarinda. One of the Tam O' Shanter Inn guests, Murdo MacIver, rose to give the "Toast to the Lassies" and one of the village mothers, Joan McLoughlin, responded in the same humorous manner. The Town Crier addressed the children, asking if any of them could recite a Burns poem. He was happy to have two quick responses from Elle Balakrishnan and Calum Lyon, who recited Auld Lang Syne.

To finish the entertainment the dancers chose an unusual reel called "An Unco Sight". Kyle delighted in his description of the Alloway Kirk scene that Tam O' Shanter witnessed on his way home from a rollicking night at the Inn, one dark winter night. Apparitions and other unearthly creatures pranced in a supernatural frenzy of reels and jigs, in Burns words, "And wow, Tam saw an unco sight!", meaning a remarkable sight beyond the natural. The figures of the dance, devised by instructor Maureen Lyon, are reminiscent

of the mayhem that Tam may have seen that dark, stormy night.

The programme ended as the cast and audience joined in singing The Star of Robbie Burns. As they marched off to the music of No Awa, the cast left the audience promising to return next year with a new, memorable Burns Celebration.

*All photos by
Tam o'Shanter Scottish Country Dancers*



From the Editors

Lots of things are happening with Dance On! at present. First of all we have launched our new website www.danceon.eu, and we or rather Bryan will be building this area up slowly, but surely. Pia is enjoying setting the magazine, which is quite an intricate labour of love. Karin is enjoying less bullying from Pia due to this new work allocation.

We are still looking for dances with or without music, so start sending them in – if you have not devised them or the music, please ensure we have permission to print – or send us contact details so we can obtain said permission ourselves.

Keep sending in articles, letters, and other things you find amusing, and interesting. Please make sure that graphics, pictures etc are sent separately, so we can get the best possible results. Ensure that the photos are of a sufficiently high resolution to print well.

Unfortunately we lost some subscribers last month – due to the fact that they thought we were now more about SCD than other kinds of Scottish dance. This is NOT the case, we are still here for all Scottish Dance types, BUT we are to a certain extent dependent on what readers send in – and at present the ceilidh/Old time community are VERY quiet, and the SCD contingent quite

vociferous, which means that there are a lot of material from SCD rather than from others. So dancers, if you want to see more of your type of dance in the magazine, please send in contributions. Please also note that we have welcomed Catherine Coutts on to the journalistic team, she is going to cover the Highland Dance area for us, something which have been lacking for a long time.

Awards have been mentioned to me by several people lately, and Karin and I together with Robert and others will be discussing this to find out the best way forward. You are welcome to contribute with ideas for contents and sponsorship etc.

More and more people are realising that in order to inform others, you have to advertise and they have chosen to advertise in Dance On! Basically if people don't know about you, they can't buy your products, whatever these are. We are therefore planning to introduce a "Classified Section" where you can advertise cheaply and in b/w text only. Do contact Pia to hear more.

Enjoy this issue, the next will be published in May. So start sending in now as we will start working on issue 50 a.s.a.p.

Happy Dancing
Karin and Pia