

THE SCOTS CANADIAN

Issue XLV

Newsletter of the Scottish Studies Society: ISSN No. 1491-2759

Spring 2017

Bruce Simpson to receive 2017 Scot of the Year Award

We are delighted to announce that Bruce Simpson will be presented with the Scottish Studies Society's Scot of the Year Award at our Annual Tartan Day Celebration on Thursday, April 20, 2017.

The venue will be the Great Hall at the University of Toronto's Hart House and it's going to be a night to remember. With music, dancing, fine food and entertainment, it will be a chance to dress up and experience an evening in surroundings reminiscent of a Scottish castle.

Originally from Scotland, Bruce Simpson is a Senior Partner of McKinsey & Company, the leading consulting firm, where he has worked for 29 years. He moved to Canada from Paris with his wife Tracy and three sons in 2000. He is a business leader deeply committed to innovation and Canadian competitiveness,



A young Bruce Simpson in Greenland in 1970. Bruce had an incredible childhood. His parents were explorers and his mother was the first woman ever to have crossed the Greenland ice cap from one side to the other, a trip she did with his father in 1966 (page 4).

and a community leader engaged in the arts, human rights, healthcare, the environment, women's advancement, and other social causes. He was awarded Canadian citizenship in 2015 for his service to Canada.

Bruce spent much of his childhood in Greenland and the Canadian Arctic living with the Eskimos and exploring the extraordinary wilderness that is around us. Recently he was invited to Upper Canada College to address schoolboys at the Founder's Day assembly about character. Here's what he had to say:

"I was a somewhat talented ski racer and moved to school in Switzerland to train for the Olympics. At 18 I had a plan. I would race in the 1980 Olympics for my country and seek its first ever medal in Alpine skiing. Then I would take up my place at Cambridge University and become a successful human rights lawyer, bringing dictators to justice and changing the world. I was pretty sure of myself!

"When I left high school, I did join the national ski team; however they told me I wasn't ready for the Olympics. So when the Olympic team was marching into the stadium in Lake Placid with their shiny new Olympic blazers, I was alone at home, devastated, cynical and disillusioned. My plan did not include waiting for four more years until the

next Olympics, and yet I had been training since I was a fetus to race for my country.

"Then my dad fell desperately ill. He had burst his appendix and we were all summoned to the hospital to wish him our last words.

"Then a good friend at school committed suicide. Everything had fallen apart and I went from feeling on top of my world to rock bottom.

"So what did I do? I spent time with my father, who survived miraculously and was now stuck in hospital. I spent weeks by his hospital bed having those conversations I never had had time for before. I felt blessed.

"He helped me understand that I was still a worthy son despite not making the Olympics for the family. I still had the same strengths. I just needed to find a different way to use them.

"Seek a different podium,' he said, and he reminded me my family loved me and would always be right behind me.

"I also found some heroes and read about a Scottish runner called Eric Liddell. The film *Chariots of Fire* described his heroic life.

"A committed Christian and athlete headed for glory in the 1924 Olympics, he refused to compete as his qualifying race took place on a Sunday — for him, a day of rest. He stood up to his country, his king and



THE SCOTTISH STUDIES FOUNDATION

P.O. Box 45069
2482 Yonge Street
Toronto, Ontario
Canada M4P 3E3

Charitable registration
No. 119253490 RR0001
www.scottishstudies.com

Membership Secretary:
Catherine McKenzie Jansen
admin@scottishstudies.com

Newsletter Editor:
David Hunter
davidhunter@scottishstudies.com

the Olympic committee, refusing to deny his beliefs. Instead, he ran in a new event, the 400 metres. He won a gold medal and the hearts of his nation.

“Soon afterwards, Liddell left the fame aside and went to China, living out his life as a missionary, serving others in poverty and obscurity.

“After Cambridge, I decided to follow Liddell’s path to China, looking to find my own. China was a closed country in the early 1980s. You could only visit a few large cities by train and plane. It was illegal to go further afield. I asked for official permission. It was refused. Nevertheless, I set off with a friend to cross China on bicycles without guides, interpreters, good maps or money in an attempt to explore China’s countryside and understand its people. We set off nervously cycling into the night, looking over our shoulders for police, worried that at any moment we would be stopped and thrown in jail. We spent three-and-a-half months and 5,000 kilometres of incredible adventures in western China, cycling across parts of the country no westerner had ever seen.

“We crossed landslides and high passes, never knowing where we were. And actually, we were welcomed with open arms by the Chinese everywhere. We finished our trip in Canton with Chinese lining the streets cheering as we cycled by and Chinese policemen with flags cycling in front of us. It was extraordinary.

“And when I got back to the U.K., I didn’t get an Olympic medal. However, I did get a Churchill Medallion from the Queen for helping open up connections between the youth of China and the Western world.

“Through that adventure, the inspiration from some key heroes and from my father, I fundamentally shifted my own philosophy about life and why I am here on the planet.

“Rather than wanting to be the best in the world and on top of that Olympic podium for a moment, I would try to be the best for the world every day.



Bruce Simpson today

“I committed to two things: (a) to live a life of radical generosity, helping others in the same way that the Chinese had helped me through our adventures in China, sharing their food, their homes and their friendship despite having so little themselves. (b) I would change my leadership goals: to seek impact in little things every day, being fully present in every interaction life brought me.

“Today we will each probably interact with over a hundred people in getting where we are going: classmates, teachers, beggars on the street. When we are so tied up in getting there, what we often don’t see are the myriad ways we can show leadership in any given moment along that road. Imagine those interactions being different and more caring. Imagine that new energy being a catalyst that impacts others in ways you can’t even see.

“So let’s fast forward to today. I’m now a management consultant. I help companies improve performance, grow, open up new markets, find new opportunities and change their cultures. I love what I do. I’m on several non-profit boards, so feel engaged in the community, still trying to live a life of radical generosity. I still ski race and aspire to be World Masters champion some day.

“I have an amazingly brilliant and intrepid wife and three worthy, inspiring sons. Every summer since they were infants, we’ve embarked unassisted on expeditions somewhere remote to reconnect and explore.

“Now, as you work hard and create adventures ahead, let me make some suggestions:

“Know your strengths and use them with confidence. We all have strengths. They will always be a constant in your life. Know what they are and build on them. They make you unique and help build confidence to get through your challenges. Don’t be afraid to let them shine.

“Find your heroes and appreciate your families. They are your compasses. And yes, even brothers and sisters with whom you fight love you.

“Character and resilience are more important than brilliance. U.S. Second World War General Patton said, ‘Success is how high you bounce when you hit the bottom.’

“You won’t always be in a supportive environment, so don’t expect an easy ride. How you react when things go wrong is the greatest test of your mettle. But remember, the strongest steel was born in the hottest fires.

“It is just another step in your journey, so embrace it. When things get a little tough for



Receiving the Churchill Medallion from Queen Elizabeth

you, think of Nelson Mandela, who spent 27 years in prison. Did he emerge cynical and warped? No. He came out with a great vision and a heart full of passion for peace. He bounced back and transformed a country. He showed resilience. He showed character. Character is the muscle that grows when you choose to follow your conscience.

“But your conscience does not live in your head. It lives in your heart, so listen.

“How many choices do you make with your head every day? But your head often chooses out of fear. Some fear is good. Fear keeps us safe. But other fears stifle us. Fear of the unknown. Fear of ridicule. Fear of failure. Fear of your own light, perhaps? Listen instead to your conscience. Ask, ‘What you would do if you weren’t afraid?’ and go for it. Remember my favourite Canadian philosopher, Wayne Gretzky, who said, ‘You miss 100 per cent of the shots you don’t try.’

“Also remember that these are attributes you choose, muscles you develop with practice. You don’t choose what life throws at you. You do choose how you react to that. You can choose the path of character and resilience.”■

Prior to moving to Canada in 2000, Bruce held various leadership roles at McKinsey in New York and Paris. He is active on the Business Council of Canada, and is a keen advocate for Canadian competitiveness in global markets, as well as increased corporate engagement in social causes. He currently serves on the Canadian boards of Catalyst, the Trans-Canada Trail, and is on the global board of Human Rights Watch. Bruce holds an MA, and LL.M in Law from Cambridge University, and an MBA, and MA in International Studies from Wharton Business School and the Joseph H. Lauder Institute at the University of Pennsylvania.

Just who is Buried in Robert the Bruce's Tomb?

By Dr. James Fraser
Chair of Scottish Studies at the University of Guelph

It was reported in December, 2016 that researchers have forensically reconstructed the facial features of Robert Bruce (reigned 1306-1329), Scotland's most famous medieval king. Is this really the face of the man whose nobles, in their petulant epistle to Pope John XXII (the so-called "Declaration of Arbroath"), described him as their "most serene prince" whom God had given them "to restore us to liberty"?

The reconstruction is based on the skull from a skeleton discovered in 1818 under the ruins of Dunfermline Abbey. David I (r. 1124-1153) financed the construction of this church (completed in 1128) as a major upgrade of a building that his mother Margaret had founded, in which her body was buried when she died in 1093. David's brothers Edgar (r. 1097-1107) and Alexander I (r. 1107-1124) had been buried alongside their mother; Alexander had also interred the remains of their father Malcolm III (r. 1058-1093) inside her tomb. David's grander church was designed to incorporate these royal tombs; twenty-five years later he was buried there himself "in the pavement before the high altar ... beside his parents and brothers." A fifth tomb was added when Malcolm IV (r. 1153-1165) was buried "on the right of his grandfather David."

After 1165 generations passed before the tombs of Alexander III (r. 1249-1286) and Robert Bruce (d. 1329) joined these others. In 1250 Margaret was canonized and her bones were exhumed for enshrinement in the apse behind the high altar. This spectacle early in his reign may explain Alexander's choice of Dunfermline as his resting place; it is no accident that Robert, who spent his reign seeking recognition as Alexander's legal successor, chose to rest beside him. Robert was the last king buried at Dunfermline. In 1560 zealous Protestants sacked the abbey; the shrine of St Margaret was destroyed along with the royal tombs, and the human remains inside them reportedly met the same sad fate.

According to the report produced in 1821 by Henry Jardine, the judge who supervised the investigation, labourers undertaking renovations in the ruins in February 1818 discovered an underfloor vault in front of the former site of the high altar. The chamber was found to contain a body wrapped in two



Final facial reconstruction of Robert the Bruce from the cast of a human skull — the outcome of collaboration between historians from the University of Glasgow and craniofacial experts from Liverpool John Moores University

sheets of lead, lying inside a disintegrating coffin under the decaying remains of an embroidered linen shroud. The lead casing atop the head had been formed into a crown shape. The find was reported to Jardine, who ordered the sheriff to reseal and secure the vault pending "a more complete investigation." When the remains were finally examined in November 1819 their condition had deteriorated badly. A plaster cast was made of the skull — this cast provided the basis for the recent facial reconstruction. Nothing remarkable was observed about the skeleton except that the individual's jaw had healed after a bad frontal break and his breastbone "had been sawed asunder longitudinally from top to bottom." After the examination the remains were reinterred in a lead coffin filled with pitch.

Were these the bones of Robert Bruce? Judge Jardine assumed as much from the start, ordering the tomb to be resealed because "there could be no doubt [it] must have been the tomb of King Robert Bruce." The damage to the breastbone of the skeleton satisfied Jardine that his first thought had been correct: medieval sources record the extraction of Robert's heart for separate burial. His published opinion on the matter in 1821 has been followed ever since; but was he correct?

Ignorance guided Jardine to his initial assumption. Robert's memory, as he observed in his report, "is deservedly dear to Scotland, and will never cease to be cherished." The earlier kings buried at Dunfermline were virtually unknown to the public in 1818. Had Jardine been familiar with them, he might have been more careful

about what he assumed. The problem is that the vault was located in a central position before the altar, whereas Robert's tomb — the seventh in the sequence of tombs on the right of St Margaret's original sepulchre — ought to have been located well to the right of centre. The vault's location therefore does not engender confidence in Jardine's identification of its occupant. Another problem is that Robert's tomb was very conspicuous — he personally procured white Italian marble from Paris for its construction. The fragments of marble recovered from Dunfermline by modern antiquaries indicate that this fine monument was destroyed in 1560, and Robert's remains along with it. The tomb discovered in 1818, which escaped the zealots' notice, was presumably inconspicuous, as would be expected of a sepulchre located in front of the high altar.

It is probable that the focal tomb of its founder, Margaret, occupied this focal position in the church. Her remains were exhumed, but it appears that those of her husband Malcolm III — Malcolm "Canmore" — had been interred inside her tomb in the meantime. I think he is the occupant of "Bruce's tomb." The striking evidence that this individual's heart was extracted postmortem is consistent with embalming, a common medieval practice. Having recovered Malcolm's body from the battlefield, his English enemies surely anticipated a request for its return to Scotland. It would have been sensible for them to embalm the king's remains and encase them in lead for transportation. Is this the face of the archenemy of Macbeth, the foe of William the Conqueror and the man who loved St Margaret? ■

Myrtle Simpson's Arctic Trek

By Mavis Cole

This article about Bruce Simpson's mother was published in the *Chicago Tribune* on April 3, 1966

Myrrtle Simpson, 35-year-old mother of three children, washed the lunch dishes and recalled how she became the first woman to trek across the Greenland icecap.

"When my husband, Hugh, started organizing the four-man expedition, it just seemed natural that I should be included," she said. "After all, we are all experienced mountaineers and skiers and had faced Arctic conditions before."

Therefore, last summer, the Simpsons left Robin, 5; Bruce, 4; and Rona, 3, with friends and, after making careful plans for the family to be reunited in Greenland at the end of the trek, flew off to the Arctic.

The expedition took 33 days to ski the 450 miles across the icecap. Only one other group had ever made it; it was led by the Norwegian explorer Nansen in 1888.

The Simpsons, with their old friend from Peruvian hikes, Bill Wallace, and another Scot, Roger Tuftt, a Glasgow high school teacher, left Scotland in June, taking two light sleds, a mountaineers' tent, 45-day supply of buttered biscuits, dehydrated soup and meat, lots of Scots porridge (oatmeal), a daily chocolate bar for each, and vitamin tablets.

Their clothing was normal for northern mountain treks — fine wool shirts, a sweater, and hooded jackets. "You don't need any changes," said Mrs. Simpson. "When your clothing gets wet it's much better to keep it on and dry it that way."

The Scots also had a small kerosene stove, such smuggled delicacies as a cake for Mrs. Simpson's 35th birthday and a bottle of champagne to celebrate their arrival, and 300 small plastic bottles to collect urine samples. Doctor Simpson, 35, a pathologist at Glasgow University, sought to continue his study on the effect of stress on the adrenal gland. Mrs. Simpson's only make-up was protective glacier cream, which the whole party used.

The Danish administrators of Greenland refused to sanction the trip for fear the foursome would get into trouble and have to be rescued. The Scots were refused details on the exact location of American radar stations on the icecap, which could have been handy in case of emergency.

But they set out anyway. A small sealing ship delivered them halfway up the eastern coast near Angmagssalik. The boat tried to



In 2013, Myrtle Simpson (above), author, lecturer and former member of the Scottish Sports Council and former chair of the Scottish National Ski Council, was awarded *The Scottish Award for Excellence in Mountain Culture*, the sixth person to do so. More than 50 years ago, this doughty woman and her husband crossed 450 miles of Greenland's frozen icecap, meeting up with her children on the west coast and spending time in an Eskimo settlement with them afterwards.

enter a fjord but was stopped by ice five miles from shore. So the four unloaded their supplies onto the ice. Dragging first one sled and then the other, they headed for shore.

The Scottish explorers camped during the heat of the day and continued their journey when the sun was low.

The prospect would have discouraged most people. The floating ice had piled up into sharp hills and valleys. The endless sunshine turned the surface into slush. On each step, the four often sank up to their knees. After four hours, they were too tired to continue. They found a hard shelf of ice, put up their tent and slipped into exhausted sleep.

They were on their way again at 4 a. m. They had hoped the ice would have solidified somewhat during the hours when the sun was low on the horizon, but the slush was still there. The Scots would pull one sled forward a few hundred feet and then go back for the other.

Suddenly, Tuftt vanished. The slush opened and swallowed him. Then his hands reappeared. The two other men, knowing well they too might vanish, grabbed the hands and slowly pulled Tuftt back onto the solid ice.

The rest of the way they tried to travel on the hillocks of ice, avoiding the few level places where the going looked easier but might not be able to carry their weight.

During the second day, they reached shore. Now the ice was solid but also the hillocks became mountains as the glacier broke up and fell into the sea. The four had to unload the sleds, make the

supplies into packs, and carry everything, bit by bit, up the steep, rough slopes. There was no thought of turning back. The boat had gone. The only way to safety lay up the ice cliffs and then across 450 miles of more ice and snow.

After 10 miles, they decided to abandon the second sled. They went through their supplies abandoning everything they did not consider essential. They even cut the edges off their maps to save a few ounces. But the Scots made it up the cliffs to the relatively flat ice which now stretched away as far as they could see. The vista enchanted them. The sun, low in the west, filled the sky with bright orange and red and gold.

"The Arctic explorer needs endless capacity to keep going," Mrs. Simpson said. "The distances are so vast. The icecap is a lonely, limitless world of infinite stillness which gives a feeling of unrecorded time. The air is crystal clear, the sky enormous. The sun at midday is severe. When high in the sky it melts the surface quickly. So we traveled mostly during the hours when it was low on the horizon. Each day when we rested, we pitched our tent. Inside, with the



On the trek across Greenland



Taking a break during the trek

sun beating down, it was like an oven, and we could quickly dry out."

They traveled two or more harnessed to the sled, sliding along on skis helped by poles. A bicycle wheel following the sled measured the distance. Tufft took sun readings daily to fix their position closely.

"There is no great disadvantage in being a woman on such an expedition," said Mrs. Simpson. "I couldn't, of course, carry the same heavy loads as the men."

On the 11th day, the sky clouded over, and snow filled the still air. They camped early, ate, and went to sleep. When they awoke, the sun was out again. They packed and went on their way.

The Greenland glacier is higher in the middle than on the edges. Soon the four Scots passed the divide. The difference between going uphill and downhill was slight but it was enough to ease the burden of the sled. A breeze came up from the east, and they mounted an orange sail onto the sled. Then, day after day, its sail billowing, the sled moved along by itself, needing only guidance. Going uphill, they had been happy to do 10 miles a day. Now their speed



Hugh and Myrtle Simpson on a return visit to Greenland in 2008

doubled.

One day, they saw the snow sparkling with thousands of bits of metal. They detoured and found the ice littered with cans of beer, American beer, thousands and thousands of cans. The beer had been dumped from a supply plane, - presumably because it was deemed undrinkable. "We didn't waste time speculating on the beer's origin," said Mrs. Simpson. "We just drank our fill."

On the west coast, the icecap stops about 30 miles from the shore. And for several miles before that it becomes rough. When, after 33 days, they saw green land ahead, they abandoned the sled, even though it meant everyone had to carry one pack and then go back for a second.

So the Scots came off the ice. "I threw myself down and buried my face in the grass," said Mrs. Simpson. "Oh, it was good to smell and feel the land again." Ahead was the settlement of Sondre Stromfjord and reunion.

It was rather unusual for the Simpsons to have traveled so long without their children. The eldest child, Robin, is only five but already he has accompanied his parents to the Arctic three times and the Amazon once. Adventure, however, is a way of life for the family.

Mrs. Simpson was born in India, where her father was in the army, and as a child, she wandered through the Himalayas. She climbed mountains in Scotland, where she trained as a radiographer. She worked as a mountain guide in New Zealand, then went to Australia and lived with aborigines.

Mrs. Simpson had met her future husband in Scotland. While she was traveling, the Glasgow University pathologist was spending three years in the Antarctic. On his return, he decided to go to Peru to study the effects of altitude on blood, and he invited Myrtle and Bill Wallace, an accountant, to join him. When they came back to Scotland, Myrtle and Doctor Simpson were married.

Two years later, when Robin was four months old, the three set out for Spitzbergen Island, north of Norway. There they lived in an abandoned hut while Doctor Simpson made his studies. Wild dogs attempted to

attack Robin while his mother was gathering botanical specimens, but she quickly snatched him away, threw him into a canoe and paddled off.

The three children accompanied their parents to Iceland, but another man went along so that each adult could

carry a child when exploring.

"Taking your children along," says Mrs. Simpson, "is far less bother than making elaborate arrangements to leave them at home. The importance of keeping the family together far outweighs any hazards."

Bruce, now 4, had a narrow escape on the Amazon trip. One morning when Mrs. Simpson was washing dishes in a river, she heard her son exclaim, "Look. Isn't that a pretty snake?" Mrs. Simpson turned and saw a boa. She told Bruce to stand still, but he did not. The child came toward her, and stepped right over the snake, which slithered slowly away in the opposite direction.

At home, the Simpsons live in central Glasgow in an apartment near the university. In addition to keeping house and helping her husband on the expeditions, Mrs. Simpson lectures and writes.

"I can't visit the theater or cinema as often as I would like," she says. "But those things are nothing compared with the joy it gives me to travel with my family." ■

In May 2017, Myrtle Simpson will be presented with the UK Polar Medal by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth "for outstanding achievement and service to the United Kingdom in the field of polar research as Explorer of Arctic regions; sea canoeist, climber and writer." Her many journeys have been documented in her own books and in articles in magazines such as the National Geographic.

All of her children now have children of their own and are all great adventurers: Robin (57) is a Brigadier and doctor in the British army, a decorated soldier following tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan. Rona (55) is an executive at Marks and Spencer, marathon runner and adventurer who cycled from the southern tip of South America to Anchorage, Alaska (18,000 miles in one year) to raise money for cancer research. She was BBC Radio's "Traveller of the Year." Rory (48) runs Telefonica's University in Barcelona, is a leadership coach and author, mountaineer, skier and kayaker. Bruce is justifiably proud of this impressive family.



The Simpsons in Glencoe, 1967

Jacobite Orphans 1746

The memoirs of the son of a Highland Jacobite who died at Culloden offer an unusual perspective on the period. John Macdonald was the second youngest of a family of five. When their mother died, their father joined Prince Charles's army, and was last heard of by letter from Goolen's Inn and Livery Stables in the Canongate in Edinburgh. One child was taken in by a local family, but the other four were left in the care of a maid who soon went off with her lover.

My sister had it in her head to go to Edinburgh, to see my father. She got all the money she could get together, which was fourteen pounds Scots, or twenty-three shillings and four-pence English. With this, the letter from my father in her bosom, and her three brothers in her hand, out she sets for Edinburgh, from the parish of Urquhart, about the middle of September, 1745.

Now our ages were as follows: Kitty, fourteen; Duncan, that was left with Boyd, between ten and eleven; Daniel, seven; I, four and a half; and my brother Alexander, two years and a half. She chose for her departure a moonlight night, that the people should not stop her and so she got into Inverness about breakfast, having travelled nine miles. My sister carried the child on her back, Daniel carried the bundle, and I ran alongside of both. In this manner we travelled from Inverness to Edinburgh, which is one hundred and fifty measured miles, in the pace of two months.

Now you shall see the providence of God towards helpless orphans that are left to his care alone. As we travelled, we were the surprise of every one, as we were so young. Our money being expended, we were obliged to beg our bread. We were kindly used by some and harshly by others that were against the Prince. One kind woman equipped us with a little bag for oatmeal, for people that would not take us in would give us a handful of meal. She gave us a round wooden dish also, which my sister put our pottage in when she met with good people that would let her bake it or bake cakes of oatmeal on their grid-iron. The chief of our food was pottage and milk, or cakes and milk; and sometimes, if we met with good friends at a farmhouse, we got a bit of meat. If it rained, we waited at a farmhouse sometimes for two or three days. On the journey we had two things to recommend us, although begging from house to house: the things we had on were all plaid, and of the finest kind, for an extravagant father cares not what he buys. Our apparel

looked like that of a gentleman's children, and we had a great share of beauty.

We never marched when it rained, if it had been two or three days; and, on a fine sunshining day, we played on the road till near night, when we continued to shuffle forward. If we could not reach a house, my sister would cover us with our plaids, and cut the tops of brooms with her knife to lay on and cover our plaids. In this manner we lay at nights for weeks, and always set off in the morning. When we had any brook to cross, or small river, my sister would carry over my young brother, then come for me, and afterwards come back to take my brother's hand. One time, as she was wading a river with Alexander, when she came near the other side, the water overpowered her and carried her and my brother into a whirlpool, where they floated, till a man who was digging potatoes at a little distance saw her distress, and ran to her relief.

When it was fine weather and we came to a rivulet, my sister washed our second shirt and stockings, for we either had no more at first, or else she chose to bring any more with her.

When we came to a river where was a ferry-boat, we begged our passage over. Then we came to Perth, where we stayed a week or two. The letter from my father was now so worn, with fretting and chaffing, that it was scarce legible; but a gentleman made shift to copy it for us afresh. From Perth we travelled to Kinghorn, where we stayed a few days till we could get our passage to Leith. A gentleman who was a passenger in the same boat with us, paid our fare. Before we left the boat, the same gentleman made a collection for us. He raised half-a-crown. As we passed through Leith we went into an eating-house, and had plenty of bread, meat and broth, for five-pence. In those days a working-man could dine well for twopence. After dinner, we set out for Edinburgh on a fine walk, a mile and a half in length.

Now, my readers, let me tell you, that for what I have wrote hitherto I have been obliged to my sister; for I was too young to remember it. As we were passing onward to Edinburgh by Leith Walk, a countrywoman of ours spoke to us, and asked my sister where we were going and from whence we came. My sister told her. She answered that Prince Charles was gone from Edinburgh, and all his army with him. On hearing this, we sat down and cried; and the woman cried out of pity. Then she took us to Goolen's Inn. Mr Goolen and every one in the house was surprised and sorry to see us in such a situation. Mr Goolen gave us some victuals, and told my sister he would get us into the workhouse. My sister would not hear of the workhouse, nor of any confinement, but took us away immediately. We strayed down towards the bottom of the Canongate, staring

at the signs, coaches, and fine horses. At the house below the Duke of Queensberry's, in the Canongate, a woman who stood at the door, seeing us Strangers, and in the Highland dress, took us in, and asked us several questions concerning our situation. She was a widow and let lodgings; her husband, before he died was a master-chairman, of the name of Macdonald, born near the place where we were born. The woman let us sleep in a lumber garret on an old mattress, and gave us an old blanket or two.

Next morning we set out again, and returned at night; and in this manner continued to live for some time. Brother Daniel and I, when we got up one day in the morning, went out to play with the boys, and would not be kept under command by my sister, who had the young child to take care of so that in the day-time, we were seldom together. We went on in this manner for some time, till an unlucky accident happened, which separated us all.

One day, as the Countess of Murray, who resided in the Canongate, was returning from an airing with her coach-and-six, my sister and the child on her back, crossing the street, were both run over by the carriage. My sister and brother screaming for fear, and the people calling "Stop! Stop!" made the Countess faint away. Kitty and Alexander were taken from under the horses, and, as God would have it, no bones were broken. They were both taken into the lady's house, and duly taken care of. When they recovered, the boy was put to nurse by Lady Murray; and one Mr. Vernon, an Englishman who had been butler to Lord Murray and by him placed in a good office in the Excise, took my sister for a servant, and clothed her. Thus my sister and Alexander were done for.

As to Daniel and me, we both of us begged, and played our time away; strolling round the country, and stopping sometimes in the barnyards, and at other times in a barn. In town we lay in the stairs; for about Edinburgh, as in Paris and Madrid, many large families live upon one staircase. They shut their own door, but the street-door is always open. There was an opinion at that time very prevalent amongst us poor children, of whom, after the Rebellion there were a great many, that the doctors came at night to find poor children asleep, and put sticking-plasters to their mouth, that they might not call out, and then to take them away to be dissected. So when we passed the night in a stair or at a door one slept and the other kept watch.

John Macdonald went on to serve as a valet, footman and hairdresser to the nobility throughout Europe. He made his name as the pioneer of the umbrella in London.

Robert Burns and Me

By Douglas Gibson

During the month of January millions of Canadians are affected by a long-dead Scottish poet named Robert Burns. Or Robbie. Or Rabbie. (Even, among orthographical extremists, Rabbi.) Thousands of festive events, involving whisky and alarming portions of sausage-like haggis, and called “Burns Suppers” or “Burns Dinners,” are held from coast to coast. Shivering admirers may even hold outdoor celebrations at the Burns statues that dot the country from Halifax (on Spring Garden Road) to Vancouver (at the entrance to Stanley Park), and even Beacon Hill Park in Victoria. Canada contains more statues to Robert Burns than to any other poet or literary figure.

So for me — after a literary career in Canada — it’s interesting to note my own personal links with the man known as “The Ploughman Poet.” Burns came from the southwestern Scottish county of Ayrshire, now known as “Burns Country.” I was born in Ayrshire, in Kilmarnock, and grew up in the village of Dunlop. My first summer job was on a farm where we brought in the hay from fields that Burns the farmer rode alongside on his way to visit his early patron, Mrs. Dunlop of Dunlop House.

My boss, the old farmer, born in the 19th century, spoke such a pure version of the old Burns dialect, that when I later studied Burns at university in St. Andrews, my Ayrshire advantage seemed unfair, compared to English students who regarded his language as Chaucerian in its remote complexity. I have made shameless use of this over the years, earning many dollars by publishing modern translations, verse by verse, in Canadian newspapers of the mysterious, and often misleading, “Address To A Haggis.”

As for our family links, there are many. Less than an hour’s stroll from Dunlop, in the Stewarton graveyard, Burns’s uncle lies buried beside ancestors of mine named Young, and their ancestors. Five miles away lies Kilmarnock where the poet’s first book, known as “The Kilmarnock Edition,” launched his poetic career. That was in 1786, just ten years before his death. Less than a century later my great-grandfather, Robert Gibson, was a factory owner in Kilmarnock, and a respected member of the town council that cherished the Burns tradition.

My Ayrshire education gave me a huge advantage in reading Burns. For example, apart from “Auld Lang Syne” (where the last word should be pronounced like “sign” – astonish your friends!) and the ubiquitous



Douglas at the MacLaren Art Centre in Barrie, Ontario. Photo: Andre Beneteau

haggis poem, his most famous long poem is the epic “Tam o’ Shanter.”

Where does the title come from? Was Tom’s surname Shanter?

No, Tam might well have been Tam Gibson, like my own father. Because in Ayrshire, farmers were given the name of their farms. My former employer was “Old Moneyacres.” And Alec Wilson in my class at Dunlop school was known as “Big Bourrock,” to differentiate him from his younger brother, who became “Wee Bourrock,” and they went home each night to Bourrock farm. Sometimes the farms had names steeped in ancient language, like “Brockwellmuir,” where a badger obviously played its part, in Celtic times.

Tam’s faithful horse Meg evades the witches in Alloway, and he presumably heads home to Shanter farm, to face a fiery welcome from his wife who has been, according to the poem, “nursing her wrath to keep it warm.” But if he had kept on riding south, in due course he would have come to Girvan. And there he might have met up with my mother’s family, the Maitlands, who came (most recently in the shape of my grandfather, lost in the First World War) from that South Ayrshire town on the coast, near the granite island of Ailsa Craig, where Canada’s curling stones are made.

A final word about the fine old St. Andrews University. I am a former President of the university’s Robert Burns Club, which sounds very impressive. In fact it was a royal and ancient scam. Each spring the five male students who comprised the club’s membership would decide, undemocratically, who should replace the two, or three, members who were graduating. The new members would be informed, on a nudge, nudge basis, and the club’s impressive notepaper would be handed on to the new Secretary.

Early in January, in the then segregated days of the 1960s, the Wardens of each of the Women’s Residences would receive the

same letter. “In accordance with tradition” the Club would offer to stage a Burns Supper at each Residence, with appropriate speeches on the Monday (or, next letter, the Tuesday) of Burns Week. It worked like a charm. Each day that week the five “office bearers of the club” would show up in formal dress for a cocktail party and then a fine, free, haggis dinner, in return for speeches that became easy to give to audiences of hundreds of intrigued young women.

If we ever felt guilty about the scam, we soon consoled ourselves with the thought that Robert Burns would have been glad to find his name being used to bring young men and women together, over food and drink and laughter. ■

Editor, publisher and author Douglas Gibson is a former director of the Scottish Studies Foundation.

For the past few years he has given over 160 performances of stage shows based on his two recent books (“Stories About Storytellers” and “Across Canada by Story”) which described his more than 40 years of editing and publishing some of Canada’s sharpest minds and greatest storytellers, including Alice Munro, Robertson Davies, Alistair MacLeod, Pierre Trudeau and others.

Now, in celebration of Canada’s Sesquicentennial, he has created a new show. Entitled “150 Years of Great Canadian Storytellers” it is a celebration of many of our greatest storytellers — English, French, and Indigenous.

To learn more about booking the show, which will run from May through December 2017, please consult www.douglasgibsonbooks.com, or contact Jane Gibson at jane1929@rogers.com, or phone 416 489 1929.

Directors of the Scottish Studies Foundation:

President: David M. Hunter
Vice President: Maggie McEwan
Treasurer: David H. Thompson
Secretary: John B. McMillan
David Campbell
Dr. James Fraser
J Douglas Ross FSA Scot
Honorary Directors: Harry S. Ferguson, William Somerville

Honorary Patrons:

Robert Buchan
John E. Cleghorn. O.C.
Professor E.J. Cowan
Harry Ferguson
John Anderson Fraser
Douglas Gibson
Alastair W. Gillespie, P.C., O.C.
Col. the Hon. Henry N.R. Jackman, C.M., O.Ont., KSt.J.
The Hon. Donald S. Macdonald, P.C., C.C.
Lewis W. MacKenzie
Lewis MacKinnon
The Hon. Roy MacLaren
Dr. Alistair MacLeod
Kathie Macmillan
Michael I. M. MacMillan
Robert McEwen, C.M.
Alan McKenzie, FSA Scot
Bill R. McNeil
Alice Munro
Lloyd Robertson, O.C.
T. Iain Ronald
Bill Somerville
Donald Stewart
Jean Watson
Richard Wernham
Lynton "Red" Wilson, O.C.

Corporate Sponsors:

The Harold E. Ballard Foundation
Wm. Glen & Sons
Citibank Canada
The Willie and Mildred Fleischer Charitable Foundation
GE Canada
HBOS Canada
Korn/Ferry Canada Inc.
Walter Stewart and Associates

Benefactors:

Walter M. and Lisa Balfour Bowen
Dr. Colin R. Blyth and Valerie Blyth
David Campbell
John and Pattie Cleghorn
Ian Craig
Richard Currie
William H. Davidson
Mr. and Mrs. Harry Stewart Ferguson
Thomas L. Foulds
Constance C. Gibson
Alastair W. Gillespie, P.C., O.C.
Alan Gordon
Gordon and Shirley Grant
Helen Grant
Jon K. Grant O.C.
Marie Gregor
Jane Grier
Nona Heaslip
James N. Hepburn
Hon. Henry N.R. Jackman
Roger Alexander Lindsay of Craighall FSA Scot

James M. Main
Dr. William Ross McEachern
Joan and Don McGeachy
Alan McKenzie
Mary MacKay MacMillan, FSA Scot
Margaret Nightingale
C. Douglas Reekie
T. Iain Ronald
Sir Neil Shaw
Bruce Simpson
Robert Smart
Donald A. Stewart
John Mac Stewart
Dr. Roselynn M. W. Stevenson
Alexander K. Stuart C.M.
The Toronto Gaelic Society
Dr. Cicely Watson
Richard Wernham
Lynton "Red" Wilson, O.C.

Patrons:

Margaret S. Adat
Olwen Anderson
Robert Anderson
Dr. Gary Ashby
Louis and Donalda Baldone
Mary G. Barnett
Peter Hugh Baxter
William David Beaton
Stephen Bennett
Stewart Bennett
Jetta Bickford
Ann Boden
John and Ruth Borthwick
Ian Buchanan
G. Laurence Buchanan
Robert Burns
John Buttars
Driffield M. Cameron
Donna Carmichael
Isabella Carnegie
John H. C. Clarry
Mrs. Elma Connor
Dr. John H. Cooper
Phyllis M. Corbett
Kenneth L. Coupland
Nola Crewe
Donald A. Crosbie
Antony A. Cunningham
James Cuthill
Custom Scottish Imports
Heather Doyle
Dr. Kirsty Duncan
Dorothy Dunlop
Heather J. Elliot
Margaret Eastham
Prof. Elizabeth Ewan
Dr. & Mrs. G.T. Ewan
Fergus Highland Games
Alice Ferguson
Georgina Finlay
Dr. Harry K. Fisher
Ian Fisher
Allan C. Fleming
James K. Fleming
W. Neil & Marie Fraser
Dr. William & Mrs. Margaret Fraser
John Peter Fyvie
John MacKenzie Gammell
Gendis Inc. & Associates
Douglas M. Gibson
John D. Gilchriese
Mr. & Mrs. Ian Gillespie
Stan Glass
Catherine Goldie
Malcolm M. Gollert

Helen Grant
Jon K. Grant
Hon. Edwin A. Goodman Q.C., P.C., O.C.
William A. Goodfellow
Alan P. Gordon
James M. Grant, Clan Grant Society of Canada
Mary Gregor
Jane Grier
James Haliburton
M. Gen. (Ret) James E. Hanna
Kathryn Harvey
Mrs. Jean Hedges
Alex B. Henderson
Iain Hendry
Rev. J. Alvin Hingley
David Hobbs
Ms. Geraldine Howitt
Maureen Hunt
David Hunter
James Lamont Hunter
Margaret Anne Hunter
John & Lorna Hutchinson
Andrew MacAoidh Jergens
Dr. & Mrs. Ted Kinnin
Dr. Alison Kirk-Montgomery
Barbara Klich
Captain Olof & Mrs. Sheila Kuipers
Douglas Lackie
Susan E. Lahey
Ruth and James Lillico
Loch Ness Celtic Jewellery
Elizabeth & Leonard
MacLachlan Lain
Marion F. Livingston
Ruth S. MacBeth
John H. Macdonald, FSA Scot
The Hon. Donald S. Macdonald, P.C., C.C.
Miss Duncan MacDonald
The MacFie Clan Society
R. C. (Bob) MacFarlane (in memoriam)
Hugh K. N. Mackenzie
Jim and Ann Mackenzie
Margaret MacLeod
Dr. Alexander Macpherson
Dr. Kenneth and Mrs. Rhoda MacRitchie
Gordon Main
Jack K. R. Martin
Richard C. Meech Q.C.
Gordon Menzies
William Irvine McArthur
D.D.C. McGeachy
Ian A. McKay
M.R. MacLennan
Margaret MacLeod
Charles and Elizabeth MacRae
Robert W. McAllister
Archibald H. McCallum
Ms. Doris McArthur
Dr. K. J. McBey
Valerie McElroy
Murray McEwen C.M.
Maggie McEwan
Ian McFetters
Derek McGillivray
Alistair McIntyre FSA Scot
Gail McIntyre
Margaret McGovern
Donald McKenzie
Capt. Duncan D. McMillan
John B. McMillan
Mrs. Lois McRae

Douglas and Ilse McTaggart
Mr. Don McVicar
Douglas A. McWhirter
Mary Elizabeth Mick
Peter Montgomery
William & Audrey Montgomery
Allan D. Morrison
Ian Morrison
Madeleine Muntz
David and Una Murray
Catherine O'May
Ann Nicol
Marguerite Noble
Orangeville Scottish Dancers
Mr. Gordon Paterson
Ed & Anne Patrick
Lloyd Preston
Darren B. Purse
Ms. Patricia Rae
Alastair G. Ramsay
Sheldon Rankin
Hazel Rayner
Mary Arvilla Read
Sadie Reynolds
Rodger E.T. Ritchie
Kim Ritchie
Michael Paul Roberts
Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rooney
Royal Scottish Geographical Society
J. Douglas Ross FSA Scot
Dr. Robert and Laura Saunders
Mr. & Mrs. Gary Seagrave
Skara Brae Collections
Marie Scheffel
Dr. David J. Scott
Hudoneil Scott
Graham W. S. Scott Q.C.
Rory Sinclair
Helen B. Smith
Stanley & Margory Smith
Bill & April Somerville
Capt. Stephen Spence
Jim & Kathy Spence
St. Andrew's Society of Toronto
Helen C. Stevens
Allan E. Stewart C.D
David R. Stewart
Helen Matthew Stewart
Ian G. Stewart
Donald Campbell Sutherland
Mr. & Mrs. J.G.C. Templeton
Dr. Paul Thomson/Michelle Perrone
David H. Thompson
Janis Todd
J. James Wardlaw
Prof. David B. Waterhouse
Dr. Cicely Watson
Joanne Watson
Mitchell Watt
Robert Watt
Ian White
Douglas Whitelaw

Scottish Studies Society Directors:

President: Heather Bridge
Vice President: Maggie McEwan
Treasurer: David H. Thompson
Secretary: John B. McMillan
David Campbell
Duncan Campbell
David M. Hunter
Edward Patrick
J. Douglas Ross FSA Scot