



O *Tam*! hadst thou but been sae wise,  
As ta'en thy ain wife *Kate's* advice!  
She tauld thee weel thou was a skellum,  
A blethering, blustering, drunken blellum;  
...She prophesied that late or soon,  
Thou would be found deep drown'd in Doon;  
Or catch'd wi' warlocks in the mirk,  
By *Alloway's* auld haunted kirk.

*Tam o' Shanter*  
Robert Burns



## Time for excellence

You can achieve a lot in 550 years.

The University of Glasgow is the fourth oldest university in the English-speaking world. Founded in 1451, it has spent the last half millennium earning an international reputation for research innovation, making connections with experts in global business, and inspiring thinkers from eminent scientist Lord Kelvin to the father of economics Adam Smith. Building on such vast experience, it's no surprise that Glasgow is in the top 1% of the world's universities today (Times Higher Education Supplement World Rankings).

Ranked in the top 10 in the UK for research, and a member of the elite Russell Group of 20 major research universities, Glasgow provides an education that inspires respect from employers and satisfaction from students. Welcoming more than 15,000 undergraduates, 4,900 postgraduates and 3,500 adult learners, it attracts students from Iceland to India, from Cardiff to Korea and from South America to the south of England. Finding community within diversity, the University's students come from more than 120 countries around the globe to build friendships and networks that last a lifetime. These are just a few of the reasons why Glasgow is sure the next 550 years will be even better.

### *Ae Fond Kiss*

*Ae fond kiss, and then we sever;  
Ae fareweel, and then forever!  
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,  
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.*

*Who shall say that Fortune grieves him,  
While the star of hope she leaves him:  
Me, nae cheerful twinkle lights me;  
Dark despair around benights me.*

*I'll ne'er blame my partial fancy,  
Naething could resist my Nancy:  
But to see her was to love her,  
Love but her, and love for ever.*

*Had we never lov'd sae kindly,  
Had we never lov'd sae blindly!  
Never met - or never parted,  
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.*

*Fare-thee-weel, thou first and fairest!  
Fare-thee-weel, thou best and dearest!  
Thine be ilka joy and treasure,  
Peace, Enjoyment, Love and Pleasure!*

*Ae fond kiss, and then we sever!  
Ae farewell, alas, for ever!  
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,  
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.*



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## Centre for Robert Burns Studies at the University of Glasgow

The Centre for Robert Burns Studies was established in July 2007 at the Department of Scottish Literature at the University of Glasgow. Housing the only independent department of Scottish Literature in the world, and bringing together a team of the finest scholars in the field, the University of Glasgow is the perfect place to establish the world's first ever research centre for Scotland's national poet, Robert Burns (1759-1796).

The purpose of the centre is the development of research, scholarship and teaching in Robert Burns, his cultural period and related literature. The centre aims

- to support the development and co-ordination of existing research and teaching resources related to Robert Burns;
- to establish and sustain a centre of excellence in postgraduate studies;
- to encourage Robert Burns Studies through publications, seminar series, colloquia, conferences and other meetings;
- to foster links with other institutions in the area of Robert Burns Studies;
- to broaden interest in Robert Burns Studies by inviting visiting lecturers and by encouraging academic and student exchanges.

In 2008 the centre was awarded a contract with Oxford University Press to produce a new multi-volume edition of the Collected Works of Robert Burns which will bring together the poems, songs, letters and miscellaneous works in one major collection, edited by scholars from the University of Glasgow. The General Editor of this new Collected Works is Dr Gerard Carruthers, Director of the Centre for Robert Burns Studies.

The expertise already at Glasgow, complemented by the skills of a wide range of outside scholars of international repute, means that the Centre for Robert Burns Studies will become a genuinely world-class resource.

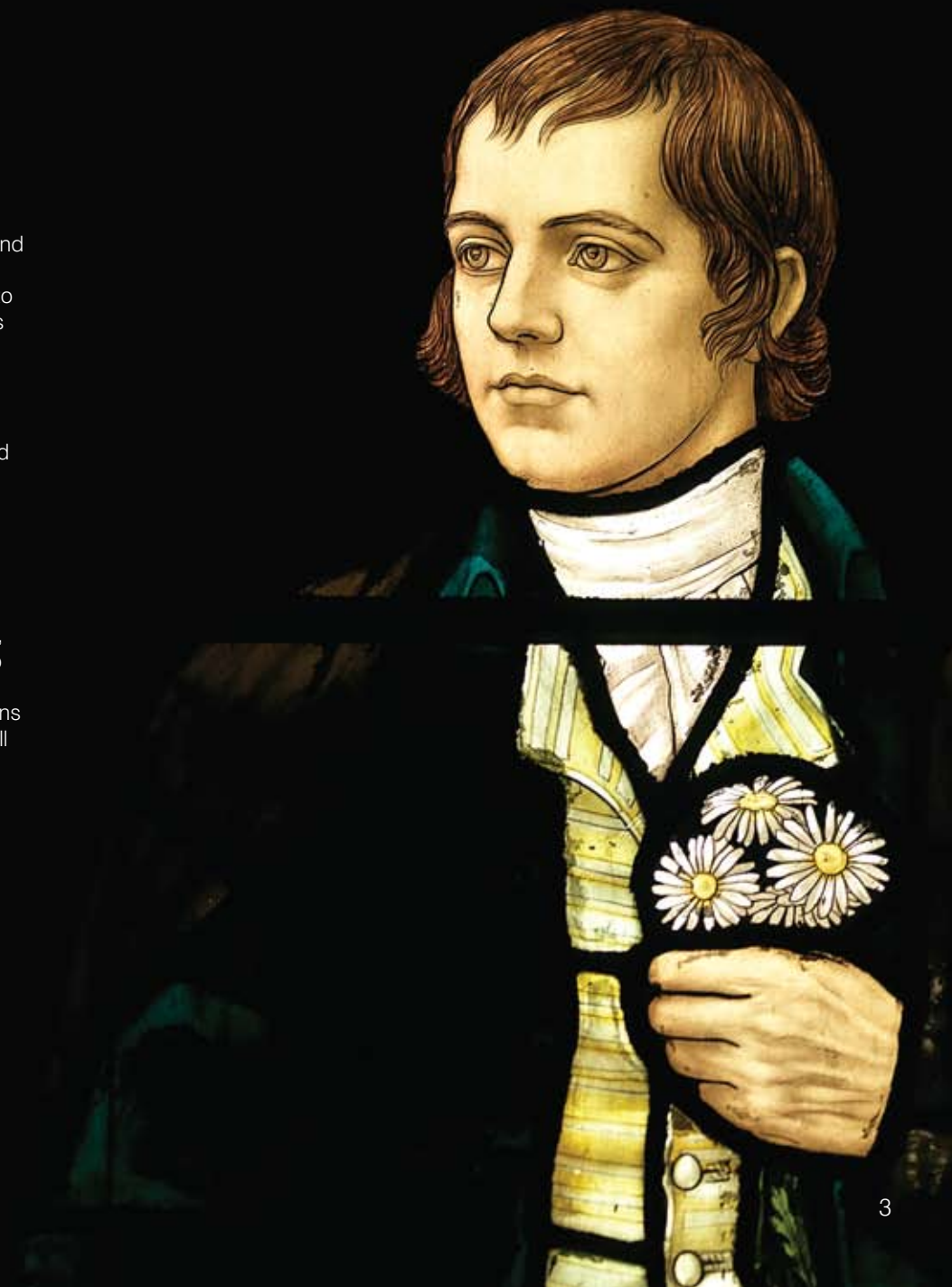
*Dr Gerard Carruthers, Director*  
*Dr Kirsteen McCue, Associate Director*

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## The Burns window at the University of Glasgow

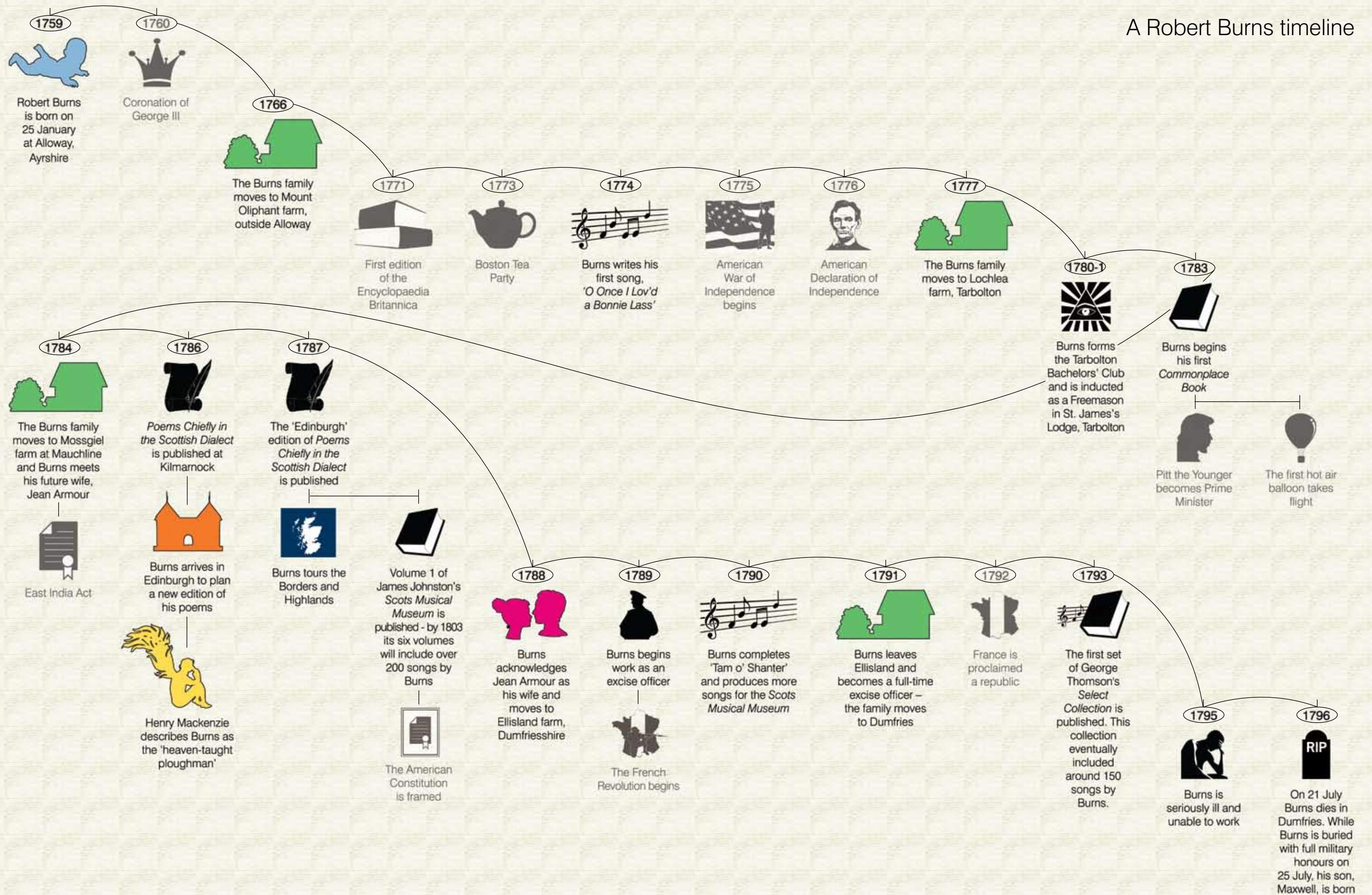
The Gilmorehill building of Glasgow University was the largest public building to be designed and built in Britain when the original plans were drawn up in 1866. The architect was George Gilbert Scott, and the building cost over £250,000. Moving from the cramped and dilapidated 'Old College' in the High Street, the University professors and students began classes in the new building in November 1870. But the building costs escalated and there were insufficient funds to complete the work. A gift by the Marquis of Bute and a legacy from Charles Randolph, a Glasgow shipbuilder, enabled work to resume on the Great Hall, which was named Bute Hall in its benefactor's honour.

Bute Hall's centre west windows were designed in 1893 by Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones, the English painter, designer and illustrator. The windows above the gallery show prominent scientists and literary figures. Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler and Newton are represented, while writers Francis Bacon, Robert Burns, Lord Byron and Thomas Carlyle also appear. The image of Robert Burns, chosen by the Centre for Robert Burns Studies as its logo, is holding a small posy of daisies, reflecting one of his best-known poems, 'To a Mountain Daisy'.





# A Robert Burns timeline







## Robert Burns and the University of Glasgow

It's a well known fact that Burns himself was not university educated. But his enlightened father, William Burness, was progressive enough to wish his sons to receive a good schooling at home and Robert thus received private education from a tutor, John Murdoch. Always happy to denigrate established educational institutions where, in his opinion, folks 'went in stirks and came out asses', Burns nonetheless revelled in his own learning and his wide and impressive reading. Whilst he didn't attend university in person, he was to forge a close connection with the University of Glasgow through its students who provided important friendships and sources of creative inspiration throughout his life. During Burns's lifetime the University was already a long-established institution. Until 1870 Glasgow University was based in buildings on the High Street, and in 1800 it had around 1,000 students, compared to 2,000 in 1900 and over 20,000 today.

Burns's links with the University were mapped out at the turn of the 20th century by the University's Registrar William Innes Addison (1857-1912). Although he was registrar for only one year, Addison worked at the University from 1887, playing a significant role in University administration. His identification of graduates who weave in and out of Burns's life tells a fascinating story of the University's social, legal and business networks during Burns's lifetime and shows just how much its graduates inspired Burns the Poet.

Burns's connections with the University begin with his baptism in 1759 by **William Dalrymple (1723-1814)**, who graduated in 1740 and whose liberal Calvinism appealed to Burns's father. He baptised Robert when he was just one day old. Beginning his career as junior minister in Ayr, Dalrymple clearly had high ambitions within the Church, becoming a Doctor of Divinity of St Andrews University and assuming the role of Moderator of the Church of Scotland in the early 1780s. Notably he was also the uncle of Robert Aiken, a lawyer and one of Burns's closest friends.

*William Dalrymple*



## Burns, ministers and the kirk

As a young man in Ayrshire, Burns regularly bore the brunt of the Kirk's angry authority. Publicly humiliated for his fornication on more than one occasion when living at Mauchline, it is not surprising that Burns's poetry often criticised the old-school Calvinist ministers in Ayrshire. His poetry is most concerned with the hypocrisy and extremism of the Auld Lichts - the traditionalists who based their Calvinism on the fire and brimstone of the Old Testament. The 'New Lichts', of which William Dalrymple is an example, and to whom Burns was better disposed, were more moderate, forgiving and tolerant. In the renowned collection of poems known as the 'Kirk Satires', many of the ministers Burns includes were graduates of the University of Glasgow.

Burns's most famous and celebrated Kirk satire, '**Holy Willie's Prayer**', introduces the Reverend **William Auld (1709-91)**, minister at Mauchline, who matriculated at Glasgow University in 1728, and who is known in Burns's poetry as 'Daddy Auld'. 'Holy Willie', the narrator of the poem, is William Fisher, an elder of Auld's parish at Mauchline, who had been censured by Auld for drunkenness. Auld, described by Burns as a 'Boanerges of gospel powers', played a significant role in Burns's relationship with his future wife, Jean Armour. Jean's illegitimate pregnancies and the nature of her 'irregular marriage' to Burns were heavily criticised by Auld and Burns endured Auld's public humiliations more than once. Auld is mentioned in Burns's satire '**The Kirk's Alarm**', and is cynically described as 'great Apostle Auld' in '**The Holy Tulzie**'.

O ye wha tent the Gospel-fauld,  
Thee, Duncan deep, and Peebles shaul,  
And chiefly great Apostle Auld,  
We trust in thee,  
That thou wilt work them het and cauld  
To gar them gree.

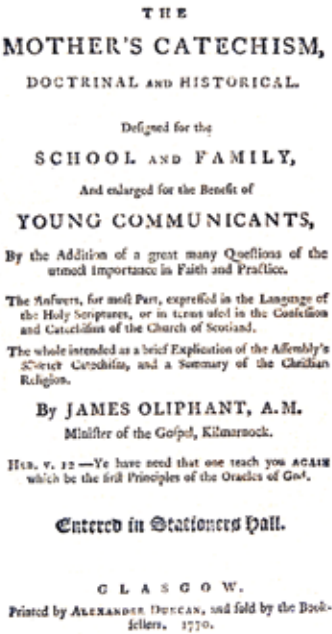
'The Holy Tulzie'

*Gulielmus Auld*



Jean Armour Burns - a copy of a painting by John Alexander Gilfillan, Dumfries and Galloway Museums Service.





THE  
MOTHER'S CATECHISM,  
DOCTRINAL AND HISTORICAL.  
Designed for the  
SCHOOL AND FAMILY,  
And enlarged for the Benefit of  
YOUNG COMMUNICANTS,  
By the Addition of a great many Questions of the  
utmost Importance in Faith and Practice.  
The Answers, for most Part, expressed in the Language of  
the Holy Scriptures, or in terms used in the Catechism  
and Catechism of the Church of Scotland.  
The whole intended as a brief Explication of the Assembly's  
Shorter Catechism, and a Summary of the Christian  
Religion.  
By JAMES OLIPHANT, A.M.  
Minister of the Gospel, Kilmarnock.  
HEB. v. 12 — Ye have need that one teach you AGAIN  
which be the first Principles of the Oracles of God.  
Entered in Stationers Hall.  
G L A S G O W.  
Printed by ALEXANDER DUNCAN, and sold by the Book-  
sellers. 1770.

THE  
C A L F.  
To the Rev. Mr ———, on his text,  
MALACHI, ch. iv. vers. 2. 'And they  
' shall go forth, and grow up, like  
' CALVES of the stall.'  
RIGHT, Sir! your text I'll prove it  
true,  
Tho' Heretics may laugh;  
For instance, there's yoursel just now,  
God knows, an unco *Calf*!  
And should some Patron be so kind,  
As blefs you wi' a kirk,  
I doubt na, Sir, but then we'll find,  
Ye're still as great a *Stirk*.

From Special Collections of the  
University of Glasgow Library.

**James Oliphant (1734-1818)** matriculated at Glasgow in 1753, graduating in 1756. Although Oliphant was translated from Kilmarnock to Dumbarton when Burns was only fourteen years old, the poet was aware of his preaching style. Oliphant is ridiculed in Burns's '**The Ordination**' for his booming voice and apparent opposition to common sense and reason. But his influence was notable, as his Catechism was taught in every parish school in Scotland.

**James Steven (1761-1824)** was a native of Kilmarnock, who matriculated at the University of Glasgow in 1777. Upon hearing Steven give a sermon in Mauchline on Malachi 4:2 – 'And Ye shall go forth, and grow up, as Calves of the Stall' – Burns wrote his poem '**The Calf**', in which he ridicules Steven's 'roar and rowt' and offers him this irreverent epitaph: "'Here lies a famous bullock!'" In 1790, Burns's brother William heard Steven preach in London, and reported 'the Calf' to be 'grown very fat, and... boisterous as ever.' Steven fulfilled Burns's prediction of fame as one of the founders of the London Missionary Society established in 1794.

The Reverend **William M'Gill (1732-1807)** studied at Glasgow University under Professor William Leechman, receiving his MA in 1753. M'Gill was an enlightened, New Licht preacher and a friend to both Burns and his father. In '**The Kirk's Alarm**', M'Gill is described by his detractors as having committed a 'heretic damnable error'. Burns, however, describes him as 'one of the worthiest as well as one of the ablest, of the whole priesthood of the Kirk of Scotland'.

The Reverend **Robert Duncan (1753-1815)**, minister of the Ayrshire parish of Dundonald, gained his MA from the University of Glasgow in 1770, and was the author of a sermon on infidelity widely read in Burns's day. In '**The Holy Tulzie**', Burns names him 'Duncan deep' of 'the gospel fauld'. In the same poem, the Reverend **William M'Quhae (1737-1823)**, a 1756 graduate and minister of St. Quivox in Ayrshire from 1763 until 1820, is described as 'that curs'd rascal ca'd M'Quhae'. M'Quhae was linked to many major figures in eighteenth-century Scotland including Adam Smith and James Boswell. He was asked to be Moderator of the General Assembly in 1806, but declined.

Also mentioned in '**The Holy Tulzie**' is the father of the Glasgow graduate **John Russell (1740-1817)** who matriculated in 1799. Another Auld Licht, Russell's father, also named John, is described in the poem as a thunderous preacher whose 'voice was heard o'er moor and dale' and as an enemy to the New Lights, prepared to 'nicely drub / And pay their skin; / Or hing them o'er the burning dub, / Or shute them in'. Russell is also immortalised in Burns's celebrated kirk satire, '**The Holy Fair**', as the threatening 'Black Russell', and is described in 'The Kirk's Alarm' as 'Rumble John', who can 'deal brimstone'. Another son, **Alexander Russell**, matriculated at Glasgow in 1800.

'The Holy Fair' by Robert Bryden  
belonging to North Ayrshire Council.

O Moodie, man, an' wordy Russell,  
How could ye breed sae vile a bustle?  
Ye'll see how New-Light herds will whistle,  
An' think it fine!  
The Lord's cause gat na sic a twissle  
Sin' I hae min'.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

And wha like Russel tell'd his tale;  
His voice was heard thro' muir and dale;  
He kend the Lord's sheep, ilka tail,  
O'er a' the height;  
An' tell'd gin they were sick or hale  
At the first sight.

'The Holy Tulzie'

**James Peebles (died 1822)**  
MA, Glasgow University, 1801 (matriculated 1796)  
Son of Rev. William Peebles, Minister at Newton-on-Ayr  
(1753-1826) who appeared in '**The Holy Fair**':

In guid time comes an antidote  
Against sic poison'd nostrum;  
For Peebles, frae the water-fit,  
Ascends the holy rostrum:  
See, up he's got the word o' God,  
An' meek an' mim has view'd it.  
While Common-Sense has ta'en the road,  
An' aff, an' up the Cowgate,  
Fast, fast that day.

'The Holy Fair'







**James MacKinlay (1756-1841)**  
Glasgow University, matriculated 1773  
Minister at Kilmarnock

Simper James! Simper James, leave the fair Killie dames  
There's a holier chase in your view:  
I'll lay on your head, that the pack you'll soon lead,  
For puppies like you there's but few.

**'The Kirk's Alarm'**

**Stephen Young (1745-1819)**  
MA, Glasgow University, 1770  
Minister at Barr

Barr Steenie, Barr Steenie, what mean ye, what mean ye?  
If ye'll meddle nae mair wi' the matter,  
Ye may hae some pretence, man, to havins and sense, man,  
Wi' people that ken you nae better.

**'The Kirk's Alarm'**

**George Hamilton (1790-1832)**  
MA, Glasgow University, 1775  
Minister at Gladsmuir

'My imprudent lines were answered, very petulantly, by  
*somebody*, I believe a Revd. Mr Hamilton'.

(From a note on the **Glenriddell Manuscript** written by Burns after Hamilton criticised his anti-Hanoverian and Jacobite views in a poem scratched on a window at the Wingate Inn, Stirling, known as 'Here Stewarts once in glory reigned')



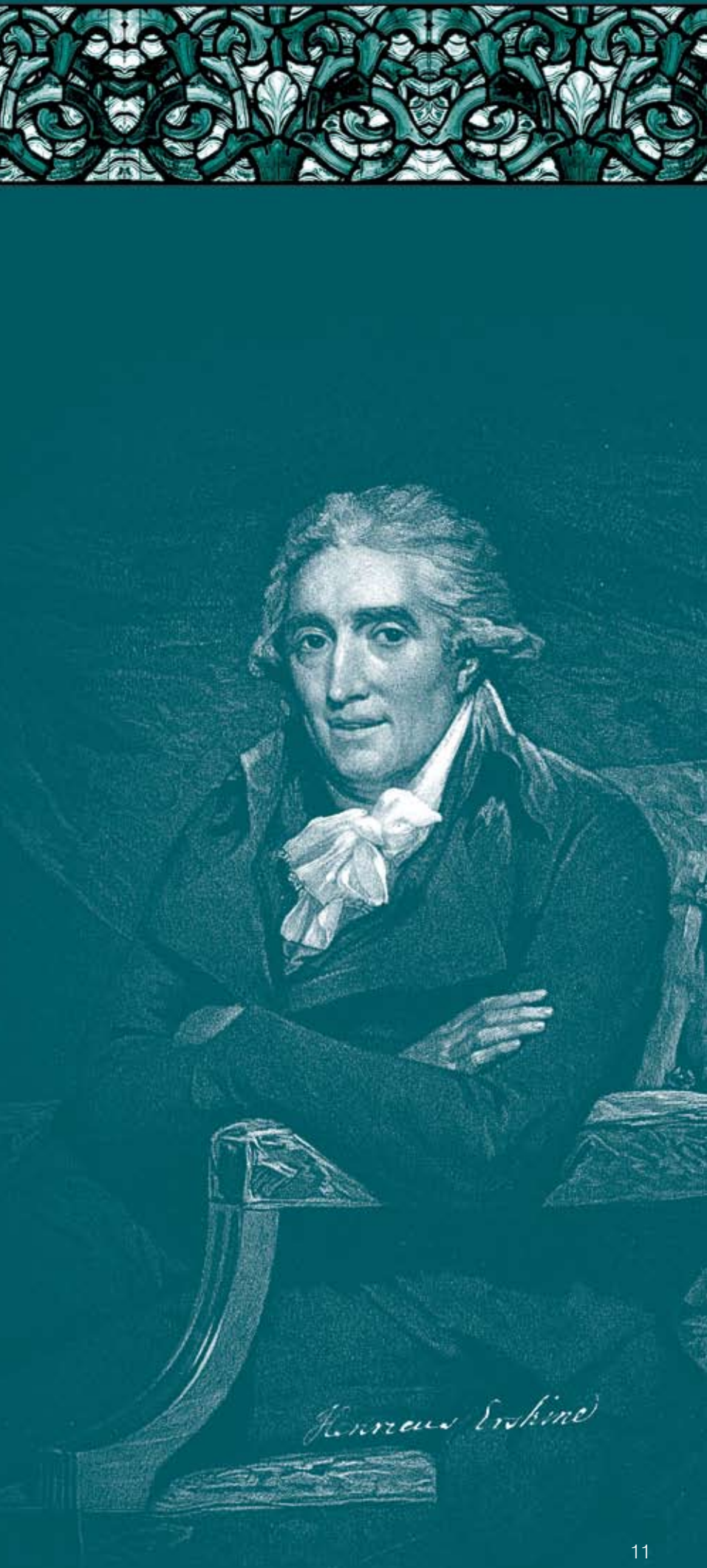
From a print based on William Stewart Watson's painting 'The Inauguration of Robert Burns as Poet Laureate of the Lodge', 1846.

## Edinburgh: lawyers, songs and the global marketplace...

While Kirk ministers provide a major link between Robert Burns and the University of Glasgow, his influential visit to Edinburgh (the Athens of the North) in 1786, following the sensational reception of his first *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* published in Kilmarnock that year, brought him into contact with a number of lawyers, businessmen and teachers who comprised the upper echelons of Edinburgh society. Many of them were graduates of the University of Glasgow and the influence of this group of men (and associated women) was felt not just in the capital of the North, but more widely within Britain's growing Empire and expanding global trade network at the end of the 18th century.

Burns significantly expanded his social network when he became a Freemason in 1781. His visit to the Canongate Kilwinning Lodge, famously captured by Stewart Watson's painting, allowed Burns to forge several key connections with Glasgow graduates living and working in Edinburgh.

The **Honorable Henry Erskine (1746-1817)** was the second son of the 10th Earl of Buchan and attended the University between 1764 and 1766. A keen poet himself, he was Dean of the Faculty of Advocates at the time of Burns's visit to Edinburgh – inspiring Burns's aptly-named poem '**The Dean of the Faculty**', where he 'for genius, wit and lore / Among the first was number'd'. Renowned as one of the finest advocates of his day, Burns was also to celebrate his legal skill in his '**Extempore in the Court of Session**', referring to Erskine's legal style as being 'like wind driven hail'. Erskine was to assume the role of Lord Advocate, the chief legal officer of the Scottish Government, and state Councillor to the Prince of Wales in 1783-4. His popularity was noted by many contemporaries and clearly impressed Burns too. At his birthplace a plaque stated: 'No poor man wanted a friend while Harry Erskine lived'.





THE  
WHISTLE,  
A  
POEM,  
BY  
ROBERT BURNS,  
THE AYRSHIRE POET.

" I sing of a Whistle, a Whistle of worth—  
" I sing of a Whistle, the pride of the North,  
" Which was brought to the Court of our good Scottish Kings;  
" And long with this Whistle all Scotland shall ring.

G. Ross Roy Collection of Robert Burns  
& Scottish Poetry, Rare Books & Special  
Collections, University of South  
Carolina Libraries.

Burns was introduced to Henry Erskine at the Kilwinning Lodge by an Ayrshire friend, **James Dalrymple of Orangefield (1752-95)** in Monkton (near Prestwick), nephew of William Dalrymple who baptised Burns. James was one of the poet's earliest patrons and also a cousin of the 14th Earl of Glencairn, on whose death Burns penned his famous 'Lament for James, Earl of Glencairn' in 1791. Dalrymple matriculated at the University of Glasgow in 1767 and Burns greatly valued his friendship, noting in a letter to Gavin Hamilton that Dalrymple was "a Friend that sticketh closer than a Brother". He's also mentioned in 'The Vision', where Burns celebrates his 'heart too warm' and 'pulse too hot', 'large in ev'ry feature'.

**Alexander Fergusson of Graigdarroch (c.1746-1796)** matriculated at the University in 1763. Grandson of the famous heroine of the song 'Annie Laurie', he became an Edinburgh advocate in 1768 and Assessor to the Burgh of Canongate in 1792. Fergusson's record as a student at Glasgow was not unblemished, and archives show that he was involved in an altercation with the then Professor of Natural Philosophy, John Anderson. Fergusson, who was studying law, advised fellow student Simeon Desnitzkoy to insult Anderson after the Russian was banned from the choir seats in the University chapel as punishment for quarrelling with the Professor. Both students were disciplined: Desnitzkoy had to make a public apology, while Fergusson was escorted by the beadle to prison for a 'little time'!

He is also the inspiration behind Burns's ballad 'The Whistle', a rare chapbook edition of which is held at the University of South Carolina Roy collection, with which Glasgow's new Centre has strong connections. The story goes that Fergusson won a contest at Friar's Carse, near Ellisland, on 16th October 1789. Drinking competitions being all the rage at the time, the contestants had to drink as much as possible but remain sober enough to blow on an antique whistle (said to have belonged to one of the escorts of Anne of Denmark, James VI's queen). The last to blow the whistle, while all the others were under the table, won the contest. Burns was present – apparently he didn't take part – but he did record the event and Fergusson's victory in his poem.

Connections between the Fergussons and Burns continued through Alexander's son, **James Fergusson** (another Glasgow student, matriculating in 1785) whose untimely death in 1787 prompted Burns to write 'A Mother's Lament for the Death of her Son'.



Alexander Fergusson



## 'Ae fond Kiss'

One of the most important of Burns's connections in Edinburgh was with **Agnes (Nancy) M'Lehose (1758-1841)**. It was Nancy who became Clarinda to Burns's Sylvander in an intimate and poetically inspirational correspondence, or 'textual affair'. And this Clarinda was the subject Burns's songs 'Clarinda, Mistress of my Soul', 'My Nanie's awa' more famously, 'Ae fond kiss', which remains one of Burns's most popular songs. Many of Agnes M'Lehose's male relatives and associates were Glasgow graduates. It would be a century later, in 1892, that the first women would matriculate and play a significant and direct role in the story of the University of Glasgow.

Nancy's husband **James M'Lehose (c.1754-1812)** matriculated at the University in 1767 where he studied law. He married Agnes Craig in 1776 and the couple had four children, but the marriage was unhappy and they separated. James neglected his wife and family, refusing to provide financial support and he eventually moved to London in 1782, where he spent a period in the debtor's jail. From there he sailed to Jamaica, after requesting reconciliation with his wife. Agnes ignored this – though she did visit the West Indies in 1792 to meet up with him – but all attempts to save the marriage failed. James meanwhile found substantial success in the Caribbean where he established himself as Attorney-at-Law in Kingston and Chief Clerk of Common Pleas in Jamaica.

Agnes's cousin **William Craig (1745-1813)** matriculated in 1758 and also read law. He was to become Librarian to the University of Glasgow in the 1760s and an Advocate in Edinburgh in 1768. His success in the profession won him the position of Sheriff of Ayrshire, and in 1792 he was raised to the bench as a Judge of the

Court of Session and ultimately given the title Lord Craig. His associations with the University were to continue as he was Rector between 1801 and 1803.

Craig was a keen poet and writer himself, often making contributions to the periodicals *The Mirror* (1779-1780) and *The Lounger* (1785-1787). As such he worked closely with Henry MacKenzie (1745-1851), author of *The Man of Feeling* (1771) which Burns proclaimed to be his favourite novel. Craig was to become increasingly important in Agnes M'Lehose's life after the death of her father and the emigration of her estranged husband, and much of his estate was left to her son. But he very much disapproved of her associations with Robert Burns which attracted a great deal of wider public attention after Burns's death.

Two further relatives, who were less important in Clarinda's life, were also graduates of the University: her



Silhouette of Clarinda by John Miers, 1788,  
National Trust for Scotland.

cousin, **Alexander Craig**, a Glasgow merchant, matriculated at Glasgow in 1758, but died tragically young; and her uncle **John M'Laurin**, matriculated in 1738, and was the nephew of Colin M'Laurin (1698-1746), the celebrated mathematician.

You talk of weeping, Clarinda, come involuntary  
drops wet your lines as I read them.

G. Ross Roy Collection of Robert Burns & Scottish Poetry, Rare Books  
& Special Collections, University of South Carolina Libraries.

Joannes M'Laurin  
Alex: Craig  
Epulchnus Craig





From a painting of 'The Bonnie Lass of Ballochmyle' by Robert Hope A.R.S.A.

## 'The Bonnie Lass of Ballochmyle'

Another of Burns's famous love songs has a Glasgow University connection. Burns spied **Wilhelmina Alexander (1753-1843)** while out walking on the banks of the Ayr in the Autumn of 1786 and, inspired by her beauty, wrote his love song 'The Bonnie Lass of Ballochmyle'. The poet sent her the song with a letter asking for her permission to include it in his new 1787 edition of poems. But much to Burns's disgust she ignored his request. Apparently Wilhelmina was to die unmarried and with Burns's letter as her most cherished possession. Her brother Claud matriculated at the University of Glasgow in 1739 and his sons **Alexander, Claud (Junior)** and **Boyd** – all students of the University of Glasgow – lived interesting and successful lives. Her brother, **Claud**, purchased the estate of Ballochmyle in 1786, which Burns commemorated in his 'Farewell to Ballochmyle'. His son **Claud Jr.** was frequently in Bengal, as Auditor-General to the East India Company. **Boyd**, his youngest brother, was also employed by the East India Company, and was to be M.P. for Renfrewshire in 1796-1802, and the Glasgow District of Burgh 1802-1806. Boyd married into the **Porterfields of Duchall**, another University of Glasgow legacy family. His brother-in-law, was a Captain in the 71st Regiment of Fraser's Highlanders, which fought against the colonists in the American Revolution.

*Claudius Alexander filius*

*Claud Alexander & Nerton*

*Boydus Alexander*

## 'Death and Dr Hornbook'

One of Burns's best-known and best-loved poems was also inspired by a Glasgow graduate, namely **John Wilson (1751-1839)**, schoolmaster, session clerk, grocer and medicine vendor at Tarbolton. Wilson had matriculated at Glasgow in 1768, though he did not graduate. In 1781 he was appointed parochial schoolmaster in Tarbolton in Ayrshire and he also opened a grocery shop there. His sales of medicinal remedies allied to a notice in the window of the shop that 'Advice would be given in common disorders at the shop gratis' helped inspire Burns to immortalise him as 'Dr Hornbook' in his 'Death and Dr Hornbook' written in 1785. Burns's brother Gilbert recounted the story of Robert and him attending a masonic meeting in Tarbolton when Wilson held forth about his medical knowledge. In the poem Death has time to sit and gossip with a ploughman, who is on his way home from a night of conviviality, because Dr Hornbook, with his cranky medical dabbling, is doing Death's job for him!

The poem appeared in Burns's Edinburgh edition in 1787 and some critics have suggested that Wilson was affronted by Burns's portrayal of him. Wilson became schoolmaster in the High Street in Glasgow in 1793, but incapable of concentrating on one job at once, he went on to open a Commercial Academy in Buchan Street and acted as the Session-clerk to the Gorbals Parish from 1809 until his death. Alexander Whitelaw, one of Wilson's Glaswegian pupils, claimed that he heard Wilson say: 'I have often wondered what set Robert Burns upon me, for we were aye on the best of terms'.



*Description: Hornbooks were used in the primary education of children in the eighteenth-century and generally contained the alphabet, the Lord's Prayer, and digits. The name is derived from the common practice of covering the book in horn to keep it unsoiled.*

## D E A T H A N D DOCTOR HORNBOOK.

### A TRUE STORY.

SOME books are lies frae end to end,  
And some great lies were never  
penn'd:  
Ev'n Ministers they hae been kenn'd,  
In holy rapture,  
Great lies and nonsense baith to vend,  
And nail't wi' Scripture,

But this that I am gaun to tell,  
Which lately on a night befel,  
Is just as true 's the Deil 's in h-ll,  
Or Dublin city:  
That e'er he nearer comes ourfel  
'S a muckle pity.

The Clachan yill had made me canty,  
I was na fou, but juist had plenty;  
I stacher'd whyles, but yet took tent ay  
To free the ditches;  
An' hillocks, stanes, an' bushes kenn'd ay  
Frae ghaits an' witches.

The rising Moon began to glow  
The distant Cummock hills out-owre;  
To count her horns, wi' a' my pow'r,  
I fet mysel;  
But whether she had three or four,  
I cou'd na tell.

I was come round about the hill,  
And todlin down on Willie's mill,



*Firmness in enduring and exertion is a character I always wish to possess.  
I have always despised the whining yelp of complaint and cowardly resolve.*

Robert Burns

## The Final Years: and Burns's legacy

Burns's associations with the graduates of the University of Glasgow illustrate just how well connected the men with Glasgow degrees were during the long eighteenth century and beyond. His son, **Robert Burns Junior (1786-1857)**, surviving twin of Jean Armour's first set of twins born in Mauchline, graduated from the University in 1802. Only ten years old when his father died, the poet had already revealed his hopes for young Robert in his 1786 poem 'Nature's Law':

Auld cantie Coil may count the day,  
As annual it returns,  
The third of Libra's equal sway,  
That gave another Burns,  
With future rhymes an' other times,  
To emulate his sire;  
To sing auld Coil in nobler style,  
With more poetic fire.

Writing to Mrs Dunlop from Dumfries in 1792, Burns recounted with pride his son's intellect and demeanour: 'Robert is indeed the mildest, gentlest creature I ever saw. He has a most surprising memory, and is quite the pride of his schoolmaster.' And again in 1788 he noted that he had 'no small hopes of him in the sacerdotal line'.



*Robert Burns Junior  
by J. Copland,  
Dumfries and  
Galloway Museums  
Service.*

Robert junior was educated at Dumfries Grammar School, and attended both Edinburgh and Glasgow Universities, being admitted at the latter as a bursar on the Hamilton foundation, showing considerable prowess in both classics and mathematics. After University, he accepted a position in the Stamp Office in London until his retirement in 1833, when he returned to Dumfries. Like the poet he was to become father to many children - 7 with his first wife Anne Sherwood, and 4 with his common-law wife Emma Bland. And, again like his father, he was also to spend many hours creating poetic verses to old tunes. But, as the *Dumfries Courier* obituary of 1857 noted only 'a portion of his father's poetic mantle had fallen upon the son'.

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Text: Kirsteen McCue and Rhona Brown.

Research: Thanks to Lesley Richmond and her team at Glasgow University Archives, and to Megan Coyer, Pauline Gray, Lisa Harrison, Ralph McLean and Jennifer Orr at the Department of Scottish Literature.

Designed by Corporate Communications, University of Glasgow.

Images: special thanks to Pauline Gray for sourcing and scanning images.

Acknowledgements: Dumfries and Galloway Museums Service, G.Ross Roy Collection of Robert Burns & Scottish Poetry, Rare Books and Special Collections, University of South Carolina Libraries, North Ayrshire Council, National Trust for Scotland and Glasgow University Special Collections for permission to include images.

The University of Glasgow, charity number SC004401