

Friends of St. Oswald's Supper Theatre
Present:

THE FARMER WITCH AND THE WRONG WAY HOME

(with apologies to Robert Burns)

An entertainment of mirth, music and mishap
Suitable for all ages

7.30 pm Friday 1st February 2013

7.30 pm Saturday 2nd February 2013

St. Oswald's Church,
Ravenstonedale





ROBERT BURNS

1759 – 1796

Robert Burns is known as a great poet - not only in his native Scotland. His birth date, 25 January, is celebrated every year, with poems and songs, and of course the traditional haggis and whisky, at Burns Suppers all over the world.

He was born at Alloway, the eldest of seven children. His father farmed, largely unsuccessfully, but Robert had a good education, both at home and at school, and read widely, in English and in French.

But he was a ploughman, and, by the age of fifteen, the main labourer on the family farm. This gruelling work was relieved by the presence of local girls during the harvest, with one in particular inspiring his poem, "O, Once I Lov'd A Bonnie Lass". This was his first poem, and his first love, but was far from the last of either.

In 1786, poverty and impending legal action by the father of one of his love affairs led him to plan a move to the West Indies. This became unnecessary when his book "Poems Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect" (The Kilmarnock Edition), became an instant best-seller, making Burns a literary sensation (and the girl's father significantly less hostile). Burns moved to Edinburgh, where he became part of the thriving intellectual and social scene of the Scottish enlightenment. The Edinburgh edition of his book sold 3,000 copies, a phenomenal number for that time.

As well as poems, Burns wrote hundreds of songs, and was an active collector of Scottish folk songs. He edited "The Scots Musical Museum", in six volumes. Over 100 songs were by Burns himself, including the very well known 'Auld Lang Syne' and 'My love is like a red, red rose'.

Burns lived most of his life in poor health. Following a tooth extraction, he died of rheumatic fever in 1796, at the age of 37. His wife gave birth to their ninth child on the day of his funeral.

Burns has had a lasting influence on the poetry of Scotland and on the arts more widely, including Wordsworth, Steinbeck and even Bob Dylan. His political and egalitarian views were often expressed in his poems rather too bluntly for his time – he was outspoken in his support for the French revolution - but have been widely revered since, particularly in Russia, where he became 'the people's poet'.



TAM O'SHANTER

This marvellous, epic poem epitomises Burns' work.

Burns asked the author of 'Antiquities of Scotland' to include a drawing of Alloway Kirk, where his father was buried. The author agreed, on condition that Burns gave him something to print with it.

The poem draws on Burns own experience of place – the house he was born in overlooked the old Brig O' Doon and his father was buried in Alloway Kirk – and of people. The 'drinking classes' of Ayr would have been well-known to him, and both Tam himself, and his "ancient trusty drouthy cronie" Soutar Johnny are said to have been modelled on local characters. He also draws on the knowledge of folklore his mother and other female relatives regaled him with during his childhood – particularly the notion, critical to the story, that witches cannot cross running water.

Yet the tale – of a man irresponsibly staying too late in the pub and only narrowly averting disaster on his way home - is universal. Many of the lines are as apt now as when they were written, whether they are portraying chronic displeasure "Gathering her brows like gathering storm, nursing her wrath to keep it warm" or transient joy "But pleasures are like poppies spread, You seize the flower, its bloom is shed; Or like the snow falls in the river, a moment white – then melts for ever".

The poem is above all a rollicking good tale, told at often breakneck speed, in wonderfully evocative words,

CAST in order of appearance

NARRATOR	Joan Houston
TAM O'SHANTER, <i>a farmer who likes the odd drink or ten</i>	David Morris
KATE, <i>Tam's long-suffering wife</i>	Andrea Lindsay
MILLER, <i>Tam's drinking pal</i>	John Houston
BLACKSMITH, <i>Tam's other drinking pal</i>	Richard Todd
MILLER'S WIFE, <i>another long-suffering wife</i>	Sue Richardson
BLACKSMITH'S WIFE, <i>yet another long-suffering wife</i>	Caroline Morris
HEAD TEACHER, <i>Ravenstonedale School</i>	Vicki Boggon
SCHOOLCHILDREN	Holly Boustead, Robbie Boustead, Ryan Capstick, Dominic Holroyd, Frankie Kelly, Martha Kelly, Rosie Kelly
PLOUGHMAN	Paolo Astori
HORSE	Caroline Morris
LANDLADY	Barbara Cafano
SOUTER JOHNNY, <i>shoemaker, Tam's best/worst drinking pal</i>	Michael Metcalfe-Gibson
MEG, <i>Tam's wise horse</i>	Sue Richardson
AULD NICK, <i>The Devil</i>	George Handley
NANNIE, <i>a young, alluring witch</i>	Laura Briggs
WITCHES	Lydia Crampton, Caroline Morris, Barbara Cafano, Thelma Mayfield, Andrea Lindsay.
Kinderley	George Handley, Lynda Howard, Jan Harrison, Tony Reed-Screen, David Ramsbottom.
Bell ringer	Anne Wappett
Piper of Barnard Castle	Angus Forsyth
Drinkers, Birds, Trees, The River Doon	Members of the Cast

POEMS & SONGS

The Ploughman	Sue Richardson
John Anderson, my Jo	Janet Barlow
My love is like a red, red rose	Lynda Howard and Jan Harrison
A man's a man for a' that	Cast led by George Handley
The winter it is past	Sue Richardson
Of mice and men	Kinderley
Ye banks and braes	Kinderley
Ae fond kiss	Lynda Howard and Jan Harrison
Comin' thro' the rye	Sue Richardson

Director
Producer
Sound & Music Directors
Dance Director
Stage Manager
Lighting Directors
Make-up artist
Costume Mistress
Gaffer
Best Boy
Focus Puller
Key Grip
Catering
Vintner
Artist in Residence
Poster & Programme Design

Joan Houston
Maren White
Fran and Tim Parkinson
Thelma Mayfield
Judith Todd
Lee Crampton, Peter Hamilton
Lydia Crampton
Lydia Crampton
William Ellis
Richard Todd
Lee Crampton
Judith Todd
June Ellis, Carole Clayton, Sally Metcalfe-Gibson
John Houston
Lydia Crampton
Paolo Astori

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Bill Wappett
Cerberus Printers
C.L & C Steadman
Lee Crampton
Lune Spring Players
Ravenstonedale Primary School
Stan Frost
Stuart and Hannah, Greengrocers

Loan of accordian
Posters and programmes
Butchers
Online ordering
Lighting equipment and make-up
Use of kitchen
Website and photography
Kirkby Stephen Produce

DISCLAIMERS

No animals were hurt or maimed during the rehearsals or performances.

The allegations of cruelty to vegetables are being vigorously defended.

John Houston stongly denies that he only got a part because he sleeps with the Director.

