

26 January 2013

## The real face of Robert Burns revealed

The face of Robert Burns has been revealed thanks to work by forensic experts at the University of Dundee.

The STV documentary, *In Search of Robert Burns*, last night (Jan 22nd) revealed the real face of Scotland's most famous poet.

The documentary, presented by actor and Burns' enthusiast David Hayman, unveiled a life size model of Robert Burns' head, reconstructed using state-of-the art forensic technology by Professor Caroline Wilkinson and her team at The University of Dundee.

Casts of Robert Burns' skull and contemporary portraits were used to recreate the most accurate 3D depiction of his head.

Caroline Wilkinson, Professor of Craniofacial Identification at The University of Dundee, said: "To be able to reveal the 3D head of Burns to Scotland and the world is an immense privilege for us and all the team have watched this head develop and take on character over the last year. Finally we can see this charismatic poet as others would have seen him in life and it has not been disappointing.

"This project has been quite a challenge and an enormous responsibility. We assessed as much material as we could for this reconstruction, including skeletal and anatomical structure, facial proportions from the Reid miniature and the Miers silhouette and texture details from the portraits. This 3D depiction is as accurate as possible based on the available information and shows Burns in his full living glory."

*In Search of Robert Burns* follows David Hayman as he delves into the world of Robert Burns (1759-1796). He finds out how Burns' upbringing, education, tough life and romantic spirit forged a creative genius that would transform him from humble farmer to globally renowned poet.

David Hayman said: "The highlight of this film for me is, undoubtedly, the unveiling of the reconstructed head of Rabbie Burns. It had a very profound and startling effect on all who witnessed it. A powerful, sensual and sensitive face. Thoughtful but with a quiet determination and a hint of a smile. It is a knockout. I felt very privileged to be in its presence."

Elizabeth Partyka, deputy head of channels at STV, said: "Last night's fascinating documentary offered an in-depth look at Robert Burns' life and, in a compelling conclusion, revealed what science tells us is the real face of Scotland's most iconic poet. I think most of us were surprised by the reveal, and I am sure it is the topic of many discussions around the country today."

*In Search of Robert Burns* will be repeated on 25 January at 10.35pm on STV and is also available on the STV Player.

With thanks to the Internet

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Clan and Society News

"Emma Street" is a new book recently written by W. Cliff McDuffie. It has been published and is available at [www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com), [www.Authorhouse.com](http://www.Authorhouse.com), [www.Amazon.com](http://www.Amazon.com) and [www.borders.com](http://www.borders.com)

This is about Cliff's life from about the age of three till high school. Available in hardback, softback and e-book.

Cliff said it is a short book that he wrote primarily for his family because his father had passed away when Cliff was 6 and he did not have many memories of him. He said he had fun remembering and hopes, if you purchase it, that you will enjoy it also.

Cliff and Joyce will be spending a couple of days in the Holy Land in late January

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The New Zealand McPhee Clan Society website is now up and running. Check it out at [www.mcpheeclansocietynz.com/](http://www.mcpheeclansocietynz.com/)

Amy Fee writes: The Phoenix Games will be the weekend of March 23rd and 24th, at the Indian Steele school site (next to state veteran's home). Come enjoy an early spring break and see how the Scottish people live life in the southwest.

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Your editor's heart has gone with Narra

For 19 years, your editor had the privilege of having a tiny little kitty in her life. Miss Narra, The Wonder Cat and Queen of the Cat world – an 8 pound package of love and loyalty.

Half Maine Coon and half Siamese, Narra was the epitome of the best of both breeds. She never behaved like a “regular” cat. It was like she could understand everything I said. She and I had frequent conversations, with her part being many different sounds...”Mmph,” “Maw,” “Miff,” etc. which I did learn to understand.

Years ago in another life, she and the surviving Peggie Hairy and the late Sylvester Highway...would become my warm “cat blanket” but when they were alarmed by anything, I would always hear soft growls from all three. Fortunately, they never had to make good their threats.

Narra has been proofreader of the print edition of this paper...and the Tech Department for BNFT.

She has appeared in every issue for years, wearing various glamour outfits– and did receive a lot of fan mail. I learned to outfit her very quickly and then go “click, click, click” as her patience for modeling was about 45 seconds long. Un costumed, she would then enjoy her kitty treats that were her due.

At the end, Miss Narra was down to 4 pounds. Then, she stopped eating completely and only drank a swallow or two at the time.

She loved to travel with us...and behaved perfectly. She loved to “single-foot” her way around the house – with her feet going as if she were a gaited horse. She loved to help me work by napping very near to me – and offering suggestions quite often. She was not a cuddly cat – but she loved to lie down with her head in my hand...and then snooze for a nice, long nap. If she became peckish, she would announce that fact in a very LOUD voice – and I understood that perfectly.

She did not eat the first morning – and was at the vets that day. He said she was fine except her heart rate was very fast and that she likely had thyroid troubles. He gave her some fluids which, he thought, would make her feel better.

Day 2 she did not eat – and I had been to the store in search of goodies that she would enjoy. Day 3 – she still did not eat.

During these days, I thought about how she would never be well again, no matter what the vet did and would not

understand her treatments. She was 19 people years of age. Her quality of life had gone.

So, wrapped in a soft blue blankie and held in my arms while both Tom and I were crying...and she seemed to try and comfort us...we went back to the vet.

She is buried where I can see her tiny grave from the kitchen window.

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Clan Macfie Clan Parliament Gathering set for September 4-7 2013

All Clan members are invited to attend the Macfie Clan Gathering and Parliament which will be held in the town of Dumfries in South West Scotland. Dumfries is known as the 'Queen of the South', and clan members, family and friends will be treated to a packed pro-gram of events during their stay.

The itinerary will include excursions to the Lake District, a Robert Burns trail and other visits to local attractions. These include the birth place of John Paul Jones, the father of the American Navy. The Old Blacksmith's Shop in Gretna and a visit to Hadrian's Wall and Museum to see what life was like 2000 years ago on the border be-tween England and Scotland.

Vanessa and Andrew Duffy are looking forward to welcoming all clan folks to 'doon hame' and are working to organize a memorable Clan Parliament and Gathering.

The Gathering will be based at the Cairndale Hotel, close to the centre of the town. Special rates for dinner, bed and breakfast have been negotiated. £64.50 per person per night for those in shared accommodation. A program of social events are planned with a local ceilidh band enter-taining us, plus a local speaker who will bring to life Robert Burns, his life, his loves and his works.

More details and booking forms will be available soon, so that you can plan for your stay in Dumfries.

More details about Dumfries can be found at <http://www.visitdumfriesandgalloway.co.uk/>

More details of the Cairndale Hotel can be found at <http://www.cairndalehotel.co.uk/>