

Winnipeg

3rd – 7th August, 2007



After an uneventful journey by air from Seattle to Winnipeg via Vancouver, I was met about tea-time by my second cousins Marion Widlake, Leona (Preiss) Irwin and Leona's husband, Doug.



Doug Irwin, John & Leona(Preiss) Irwin - Aug. 07



I share common ancestry with Marion and Leona from our Great Grandparents, James Kerr and Janet Richardson who married in Hightae, Lochmaben, Dumfries, Scotland in 1880. My grandmother was Jessie (Kerr) Henderson (1886-1965), and their grandmother was her sister Marion (Kerr) Rennie (1891-1968) who emigrated to Manitoba, Canada in 1913.

On the way to my hotel, the Holiday Inn on Portage Avenue West, I was invited to join them for dinner at ‘The Keg’ restaurant just across the road from my resting place for the next four nights. I accepted with alacrity, but asked for five minutes to check-in and change into fresh clothes. This done, we headed off for food and drink and a good chin-wag-getting-to-know-you session. The meal was great and all-in-all it was wonderful reception ... auguring well for good company and much to be accomplished as a family tourist over the long week-end. Marion, as promised, was clearly going to look after her Scottish cousin. This she did magnificently as you will see from the following, mostly pictorial, record of my stay.

By 10 am on Saturday the 4th August Marion, and yet another 2nd Cousin, Bob Preiss had picked me up for a day of activity. First stop was the downtown Genealogy Centre which gave a good idea of the data available to researchers in print form, as well as limited resources on-line that folks with no Internet connection at home could use.

Cousin Bob Preiss, Orma Sozansky and John



After an hour or so we went further downtown to dine up in the heights of the Royal Crown rotating restaurant. In order to reach it, I was brave (*for me*), because I opted to take the elevator that cruises up the OUTSIDE of the tower. The buffet meal was splendid and the views impressive.



Two Views of Winnipeg from the Rotating Restaurant



John & Bob Preiss in the high tower rotating restaurant in Downtown Winnipeg, 4th Aug. 07



Cousins, John Henderson and Marion Widlake - In the Rotating Restaurant 'Downtown' Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada on 4th August, 2007

Just across the way from the tower is the Upper Fort Garry Gate - all that remains of the original Fort Garry at the confluence of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers.

NEAR THIS SITE STOOD THE FOLLOWING FORTS: FORT ROUGE, UNDER LA VÉRENDRYE, 1733; FORT GIBRALTAR, OF THE NORTH WEST COMPANY, 1810, BECAME FORT GARRY OF THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY, 1822; REPLACED BY UPPER FORT GARRY, OF STONE, BEGUN 1835, EXTENDED IN 1850'S WHEN THIS GATEWAY WAS ERECTED, DEMOLISHED 1882.



Bob and John at Fort Garry - 4th Aug. 07

Then we set out towards the suburbs town of Transcona where the Rennie family had settled in 1914. However leaving a pilgrimage to their actual town abodes until Monday, we made a sentimental visit to the peace and quiet of the very extensive, but beautifully tended, rural cemetery on the outskirts.

Cousins, Bob Preiss and John Henderson pay their respects on 4th August, 2007, to
Alexander P. Rennie (1889, Stirling-1958, Winnipeg) & Marion (Kerr) Rennie (1891, Bannockburn-1968, Winnipeg)
Bob's Grandparents and John's Grand Uncle and Aunt



Memorial to Leonard Preiss & Helen McIntosh (Rennie) Preiss



From there, as it was after 5pm by that time, we headed back to the city and Marion first dropped Bob off at his condo overlooking the river before doing likewise with me at my hotel. But not before she invited me round to her nearby apartment later on for supper, a natter, and a look at about half-a-dozen family videos. Quite an opening day!

John Henderson of Stirling, Scotland - Winnipeg on 3rd August, 2007



Sunday 5th August, 2007 - Winnipeg

As I had learned during my Saturday evening visit to Marion's apartment, her plans for our next day together were well in hand, and included the company of two of her close friends, Betty Woods and Diana (Hurst) Ahluwalia after we two had attended a special service in the Knox United Church being held to mark the presence of the Robert Burns World Federation Conference being held in the city of Winnipeg.

WINNIPEG FREE PRESS, SATURDAY, AUGUST 4, 2007

City hosts Robert Burns conference

HE is Scotland's favourite son and this weekend his spirit will be celebrated with plenty of piping and haggis during the annual Robert Burns World Federation conference.

The event — which brings together Burns' clubs from all over the world — is usually held in the United Kingdom. This year, however, organizers decided to come to Winnipeg in honour of the 100th anniversary of the Winnipeg Burns Club — the oldest continuously existing federated Burns Club outside the U.K.

"It's quite an honour," member Lawrence Cormack said Friday.

The last time the conference was held in North America was 2001, when it was in Atlanta, Ga.

On Sunday morning, there will be a church service at Knox United Church where the Celtic Pipe Band and the great organ will both play the Highland Cathedral, a popular bagpipe tune. The public is invited to attend.

About 150 people from the U.K and across North America are expected to take part in the conference.

Cormack said the Winnipeg club was started by a group of railway workers in the west end. During the depression, the club scraped together enough money for a bronze statue of Burns that stands today on the grounds of the Manitoba legislature.

Celebration of Worship

Sunday, August 5, 2007
Worship Leader: Joyce Allen
Music Ministry Leader: Barry Anderson
Musical Group: Brochan Lom

PRELUDE Chorale Prelude on "Crimond" [Eric Thiman]

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

OPENING OF THE BIBLE

INTROIT

PRAYER

HYMN 409 Morning Has Broken

PEACE OF CHRIST

ANTHEM The Lord is My Shepherd

READING: Luke 12:13-21

John Haining, Pres. Robert Burns Society

ANTHEM Paul's Song

READING: Psalm 107: 1—9; 43

Bill Dawson, Senior V.P. Robert Burns Society

TEACHING Sharing

HYMN 567 Will You Come and Follow Me

OFFERING

OFFERTORY *Interlude* [Gordon Young]

DEDICATION: [820]

*Make a joyful noise all the earth!
Worship your God with gladness!
Make a joyful noise all the earth.
Come to this place with a song*

*Know that your God has made you
Know it's to God you belong.
And come to this place with joyfulness and praise
Worship your God with a song!*

Make a joyful noise. . .

COMMON PRAYER

PRAYER OF JESUS

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
for Thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

HYMN 747 23rd Psalm

BENEDICTION

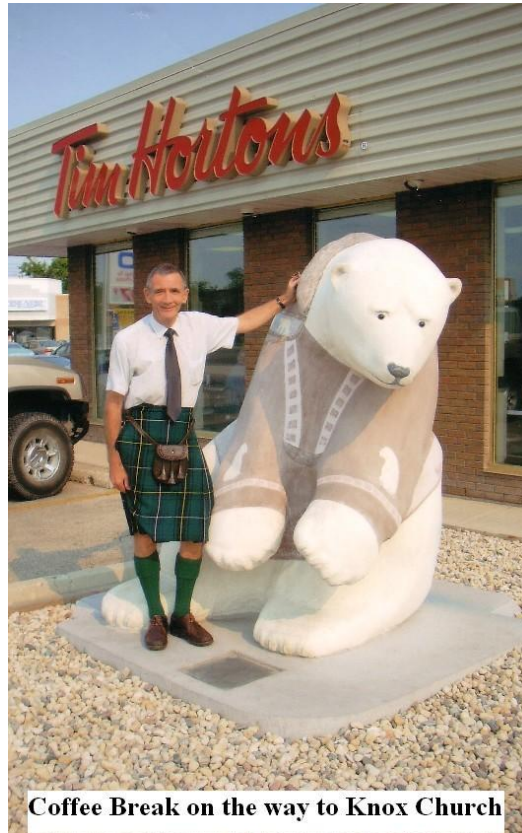
CHORAL BLESSING: [586]

*We shall go out with hope of resurrection
We shall go out, from strength to strength go on,
We shall go out and tell our stories boldly,
Tales of a love that will not let us go.*

*We'll sing our songs of wrongs that can be righted,
We'll dream our dreams of hurts that can be healed.
We'll weave a cloth of all the world united
Within the vision of new life in Christ.*

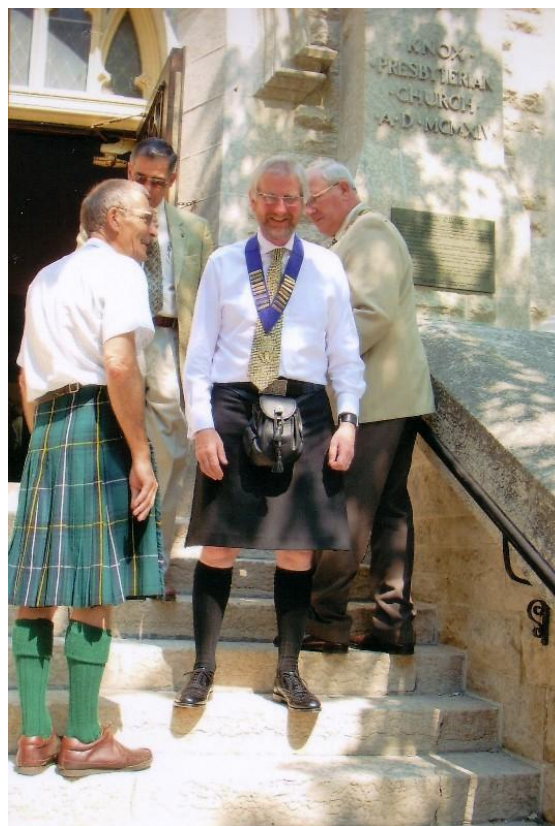
POSTLUDE Highland Cathedral (Traditional Scottish)

Suitably attired for church – although Burns was a Lowlander (!) – we made a ritual stop at Tim Hortons (The ‘Starbucks’ of Canada!)*The statues of polar bears were commissioned a couple of years ago and painted by local artists. Now there are 52 of them sprinkled all over the province. The one I am standing beside here is called "Nanook in Sealskins", painted by Robert R. Taylor, and the bear is wearing the traditional attire of Inuit women.*

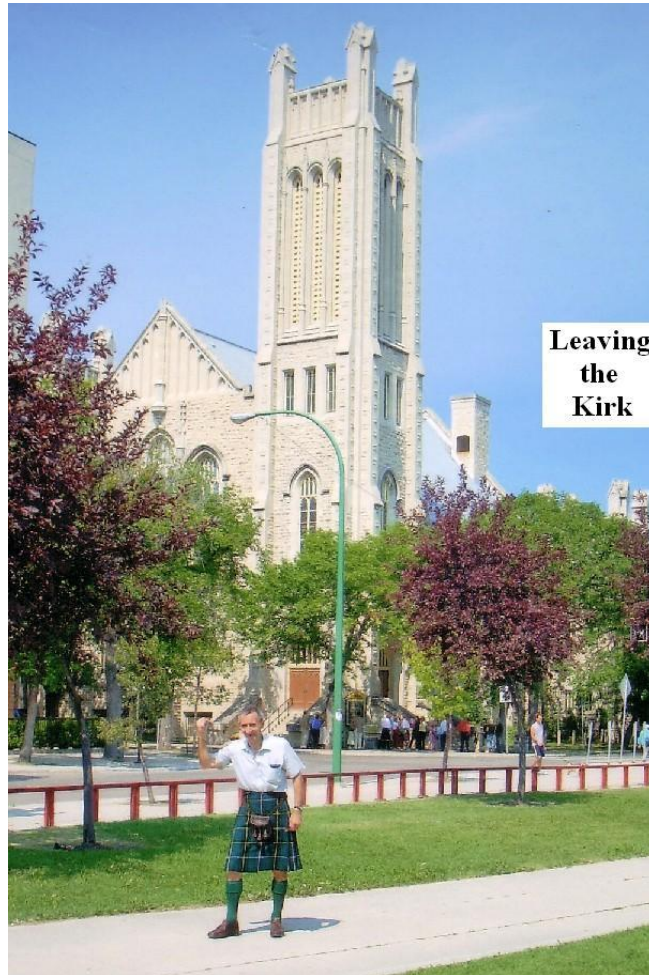


Coffee Break on the way to Knox Church

Then after the inspiring service we went out to meet some of the other Conference ‘kilties’



**Chatting with Bill Dawson from Alloa, Scotland
Senior Vice-President of the Robert Burns Society**



**Leaving
the
Kirk**

And then head off to take Betty and Diana out for lunch at 'Cora's' before being shown round the Manitoba Museum by the latter who is a volunteer Tour Guide there.



Betty, John, Diana



One of the highlights of this visit was viewing and clambering round the 'NONSUCH' ..



The Nonsuch was the ship that sailed into Hudson Bay in 1668-1669, in the first trading voyage for what was to become the Hudson's Bay Company two years later. Originally built as a merchant ship in 1650, and later the Royal Navy ketch HMS Nonsuch, the vessel was sold to Sir William Warren in 1667. The name means "none such", i.e. "unequaled".

The new Nonsuch, a replica of the original, was commissioned by the HBC to celebrate their tercentenary in 1970. It was crafted using tools and materials of the seventeenth century. When completed, it was placed on a ship and transported to Canada, where it sailed down the Atlantic coast of Canada and the United States. It also sailed through the Great Lakes and then was placed on a semi trailer and taken to Seattle for a voyage down the Pacific coast. It was presented by HBC to the citizens of Manitoba and placed on permanent display in 1973 in the Nonsuch Gallery at the Manitoba Museum in Winnipeg, Manitoba. It is in a 90 foot gallery giving the feel of a 17th century scene to visitors and shows the ship at the English port of Deptford, just before embarking on her journey to Hudson Bay.

After thanking, and bidding farewell to Diana Marion, Betty and I set off for The Scots Monument ...

THE SCOTS MONUMENT

One of the aims of The St. Andrew's Society of Winnipeg is to preserve the contribution of Scottish culture to our city. A number of years ago, the Heritage Committee of the Society conceived the idea of restoring Fort Douglas, the home base of the first Scottish settlers who were brought to Manitoba in 1812. The Society began to gather and set aside funds for this project.



After research, it was decided that the Society would attempt to construct a representation of the fort using posts to outline the perimeter of the fort, & install descriptive plaques to tell the story.

The Heritage Committee then conceived the idea of a centrepiece that depicts a stainless steel stylized Scots thistle, the floral emblem of Scotland since ancient times, surrounded by three large descriptive bronze plaques. The monument is backed by a circular wall of stone in which are inlaid actual stones solicited & received from parishes throughout Scotland.

At the centre of this wall is set a plaque with an evocative, anonymous poem, *Cairn an Dorin – Cairn of Tears* – which vividly describes the departure from Scotland of many of these early settlers.

The Monument is dedicated to Thomas Douglas, the 5th Earl of Selkirk and marks the historical origins of Manitoba as a European-settled territory. It also honours all Scots and their descendants who settled in the provinces, territories, and districts of Canada.

The Scots Monument is a gift to the City of Winnipeg through the generous donations of members, associations, corporations and friends of the St. Andrew's Society through the St. Andrew's Society Trust Fund.



Fort Douglas Park, Winnipeg



Betty & John at The Scots Monument

Memorial to the settlers under construction



And then we were off to the confluence of the two rivers to enjoy Betty's treat .. a trip 'up an doon the waater' ! Phew ... but it wis a waarm day!





View from the river of The Golden Boy atop Manitoba's Legislative Building in Winnipeg



Marion snaps Betty & John enjoying a laugh after the trip

What a wonderful day of activity and friendship Wow!

Winnipeg – 6th and 7th August, 2007

Well, if the previous three days in town had been busy, interesting and great fun, my penultimate day in Manitoba proved to be even more so – fascinating, nostalgic, and historical visits in the morning and afternoon, then a lively Scots night in the evening!

Marion and I started out at the back of nine to meet up with Leona at her house in North Kildonan – our intentions being firstly to tour and walk around Transcona, the ‘stomping-ground’ of immigrants from Scotland in 1913, Eck and Mae (Kerr) Rennie, and many of their descendant families, including Marion and Leona.



**2nd Cousins Leona (Preiss) Irwin & John Henderson on 6th August, 2007
at Leona and Doug's Home - 11 Joanna Drive, North Kildonan, Winnipeg**

After a wee look at Leona’s family photo albums, a blether, and a look at the back garden from the deck out there, we headed down to Transcona where our first halt was for coffee and cookies at yet another ‘Tim Hortons’! Thence it was quite emotional as we stopped off at various places with Rennie/Kerr family associations going back over nearly one hundred years. Firstly we went to the area where railwayman Eck had worked

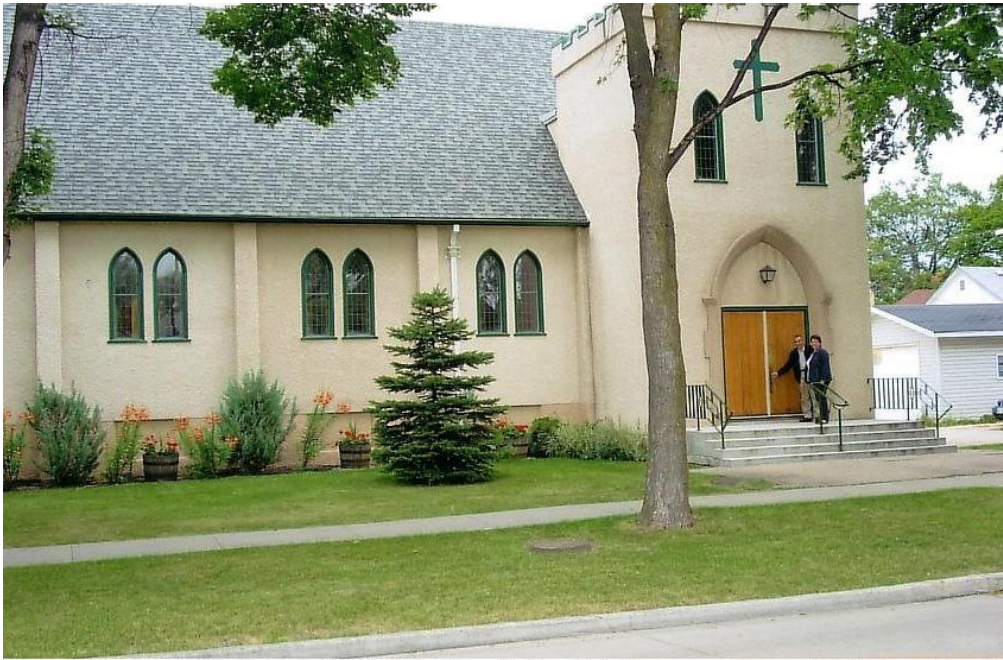


Leona and John outside the Transcona Railway Marshalling Yard where her Grandfather Eck Rennie of Stirling, Scotland worked from 1913 onwards

Then on to the Rennie family home at 211 Whittier Avenue West



John on 6th August, 2007 at the former Rennie Family Home in Transcona



John & Leona on 6th August, 2007 at the Rennie Family's Transcona Memorial United Church

Our next goal was some miles away up Henderson Highway and across the Red River to reach St. Andrew's Church ... about which I had mixed feelings as I tried to unravel how and why an Anglican Church should be named after Scotland's patron saint.



John & Leona outside the historic St. Andrew's Church on the Red River near Lockport on the 6th of August, 2007

I got a few pointers on this from a church pamphlet, but nothing definitive

In the 1820s, following the amalgamation of the Hudson's Bay Company and the North-West Company, this stretch of the Red River was settled by retired and redundant members of the former. They were mostly Orkney Islander families.

An Archdeacon of the Anglican Church, William Cockran, established a mission and built a wooden church in 1831 in the area where the present church stands. Due to overcrowding, the old church was demolished in 1844, and, by 1849 it had been replaced by a larger one made of stone.

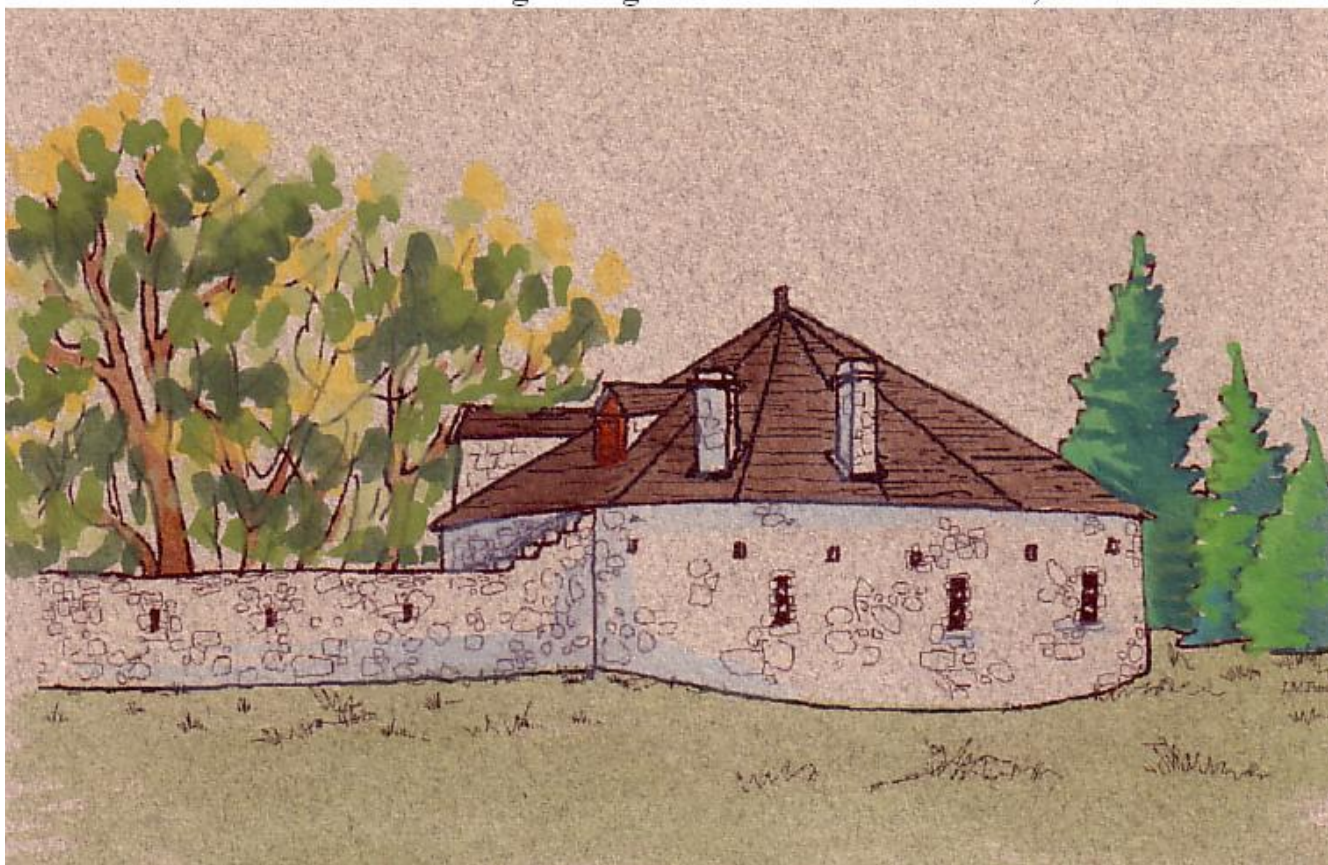
With hindsight one can see that the uniting of Scots Kirk folk and Anglicans must have seemed a logical step. But it is clear today, from the forms of worship followed, that, despite the fact that the Scottish St. Andrew's Saltire flag still hangs proudly on the front wall above the pulpit, it had been Anglicans who had had the money and power to create such a building while the Scots had probably been, for the most part, artisans and labourers!



After visiting the Rectory Museum, we headed off for some lunch on River Road Heritage Parkway at Kennedy House and Museum which houses the Maple Grove Tea Room ...a favourite midday snack retreat for Cousin Marion. The house was built in 1866 by a Captain William Kennedy, who was an explorer, entrepreneur and a trader. The house still has three period-furnished rooms, but now it is also blessed with a glassed-in tea room overlooking the terraced English gardens and the Red River. ... although the gardens are currently a bit unkempt, I can vouch for the fact that delicious food is served indoors!

It was by then mid-afternoon, so we headed back via Lower Fort Garry to drop-off Leona in North Kildonan.

Part of Lower Fort Garry, near Lockport on the Red River as designed and handpainted by Judith Pearson a former teaching colleague of John's Second Cousin, Marion Widlake



That left a few hours rest-time before my evening outing with Marion, Betty, Leona and Doug to



18 Pavilion of Scotland

Heather Curling Club – 120 Youville Street (Located south of Marion at Yardley)



Showtimes:
 Sun-Wed 6:45, 8:15, 9:45pm
 Thu, Fri 6:15, 8:15, 9:45pm
 Sat-Sun, 6:45, 8:15, 9:45pm

Hours:
 Sun-Wed 6:00-11:00pm
 Thu-Sat 6:00pm-12:00am
 Fri 6:00pm-1:00am
 Sat 5:00pm-12:00am

Late Night Parties:
 Thu, Fri, Sat 1:00pm

Dinner Reservations:
 Not Available



CEUD MILE FAILTE!

If you're looking for non-stop entertainment and kegs that never run dry, come to the Pavilion of Scotland where we are celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Robert Burns Club! There is something for everyone: you can learn how to weave the Freemasons' Universal Tartan, children can enjoy colouring and crafts, or you can test your strength at Saturday's Heavy Games (1:00pm) by throwing cabers' around! Everyone with a drop of Scottish blood can sample a bit of haggis, a hinde or some flies' cemetery from our kitchen! Don't forget to stop by our bar for a taste of true Scottish beer like Tennant's Lager, fine single malt scotch or a soft drink from Scotland.

Pavilion Sponsor: Scottish Association of Winnipeg Inc. www.pavilionofscotland.ca	Pavilion Coordinator: Denis Lorteau	Adult Ambassadors: Brian Cutts Val Cutts	Youth Ambassadors: Emma Domke Matthew Van Helvert
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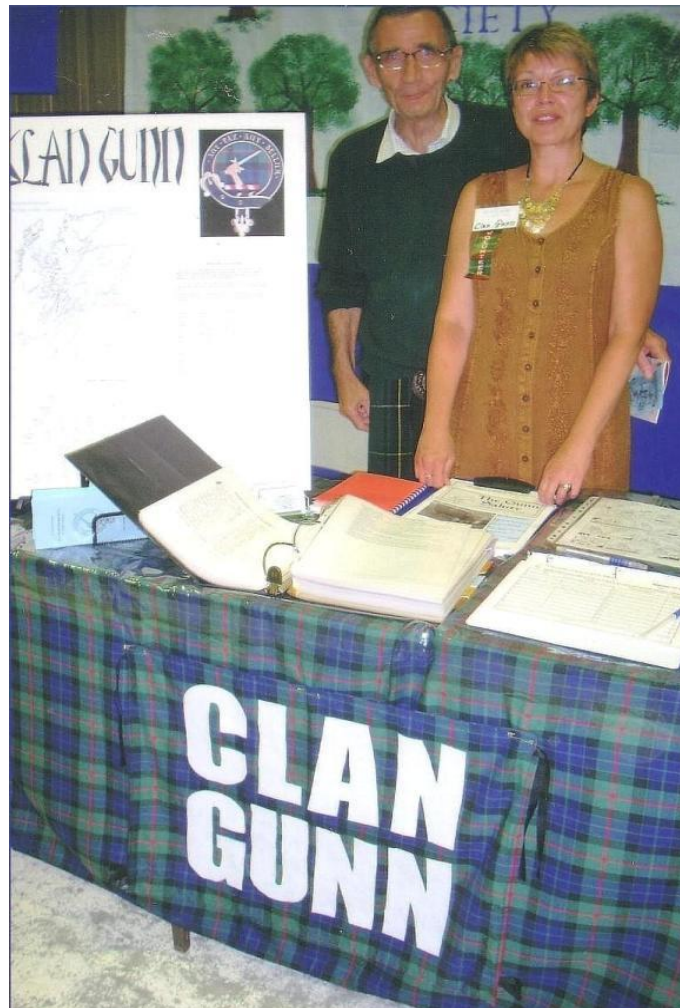
John, Leona, Doug and Betty ready for a Scots Evening

This was great fun, if one ignored the fact that Scottish Highland dancing is seldom, if ever, done to Burns' songs ... it was here ... and the local pipe band was superb!



Inside the pavilion we also had numerous kilties like me, as well as my more casually garbed cousins and friends, delving into a Lowlander Robert Burns Supper of haggis, neeps and tatties ... which, as it was my round, I invited my group to wash down with 15 year-old Islay Malt whisky. This they all did with relish!

Apart from demonstrating my Scottish Country Dancing ‘quick-change of step’, ‘strathspey step’ and ‘pas-de-bas’ in front of the amused/bemused ladies of the SCD stall, I had the thrill of spending time at the GUNN CLAN stall ... one branch of the HENDERSON CLAN being a sept of GUNN.



John Henderson with Debra (Gunn) Kuzub, Folklorama, Winnipeg - 6th August, 2007

A guid time wis hid by yin and aa !

And so to the farewells on the morrow to Marion and Leona!

We headed off to the airport at about ten for me to check-in for my 11.45 a.m. flight back to Toronto. Coffee was enjoyed in the foyer then we went outside for final photographs ... *Marion and her camera ... ever present to record the wonderful long week-end she had organised for me.*



"Amelia Bearhart Visits Stevenson Field" at Winnipeg International Airport as John bids 'Au Revoir' to Leona

A million thanks MARION



John bids 'Au Revoir' to Marion at Winnipeg International Airport