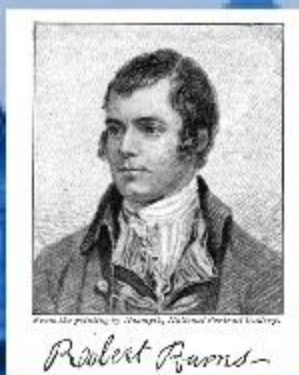
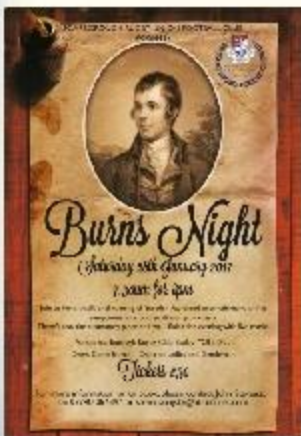


The 25-th of January is the birthday of the greatest Scottish poet, Robert Burns. This date is usually celebrated in all English-speaking countries.

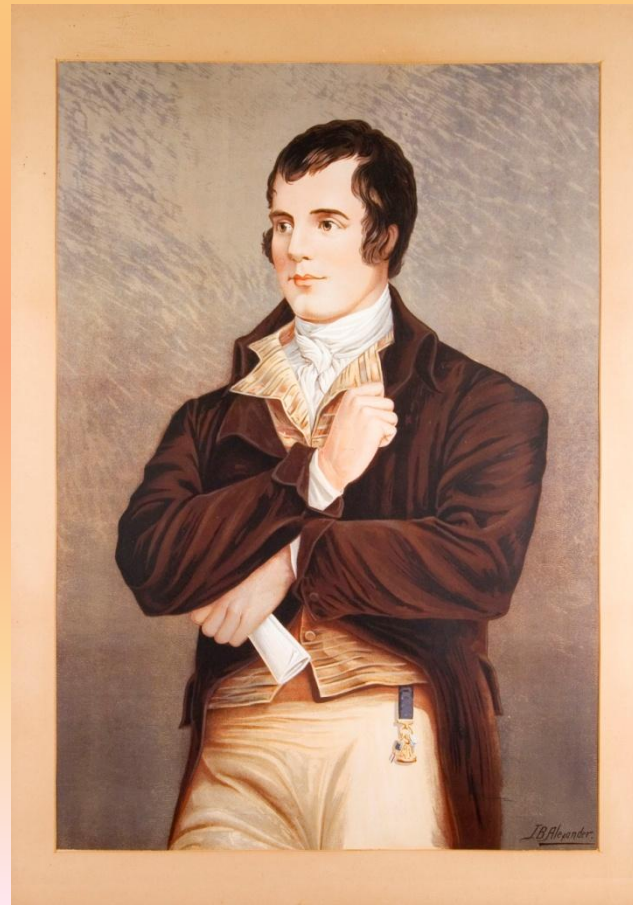
BURNS NIGHT

25th January

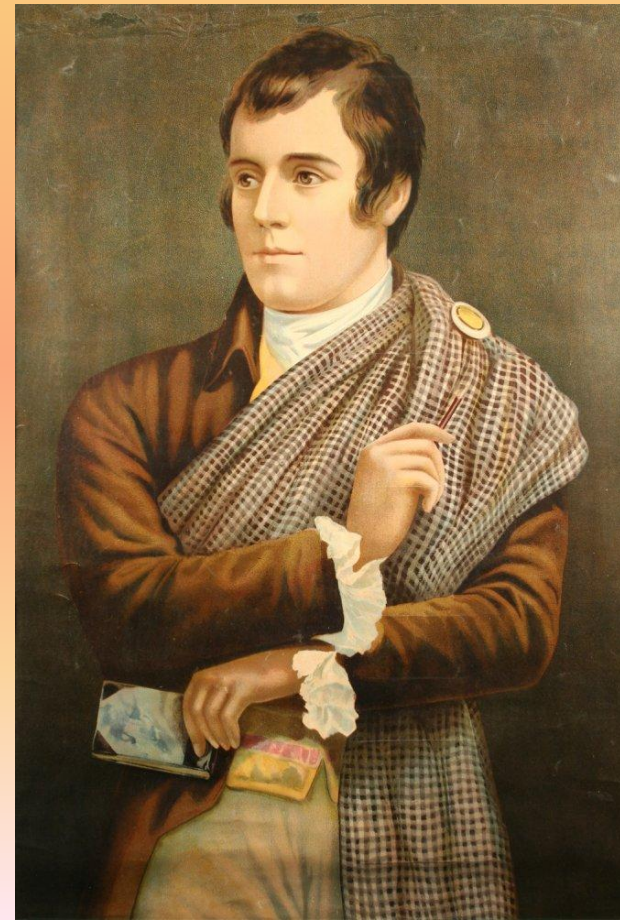


Robert Burns

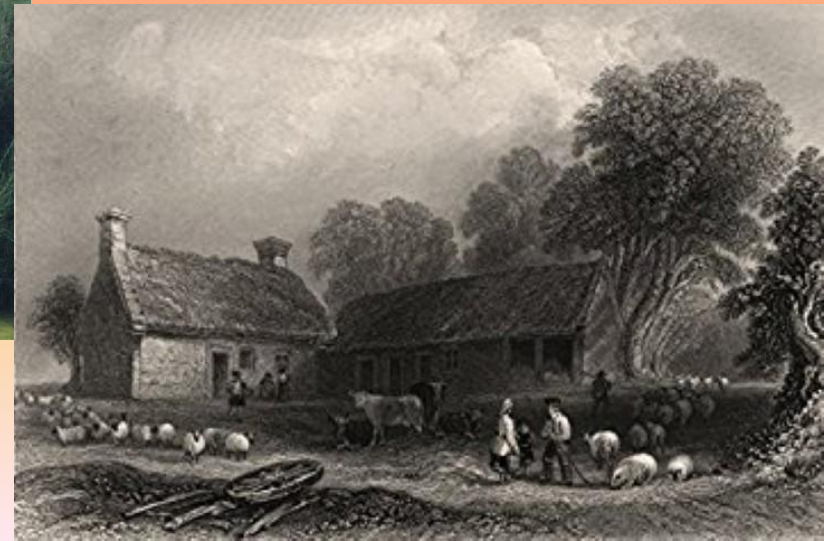
Robert Burns is a celebrated Scottish poet and songwriter. He is widely considered the national poet of Scotland and was an important influence on the early Romantic movement.



Robert Burns was born at Alloway, near Ayr, on January 25, 1759. Robert was educated briefly in Alloway before going to Ayr. However, whilst studying his family were beset by financial concerns and Burns was forced to work as a farm labourer. Burns had to work at a variety of labouring jobs, but, in his spare time, began to compose poetry and songs.

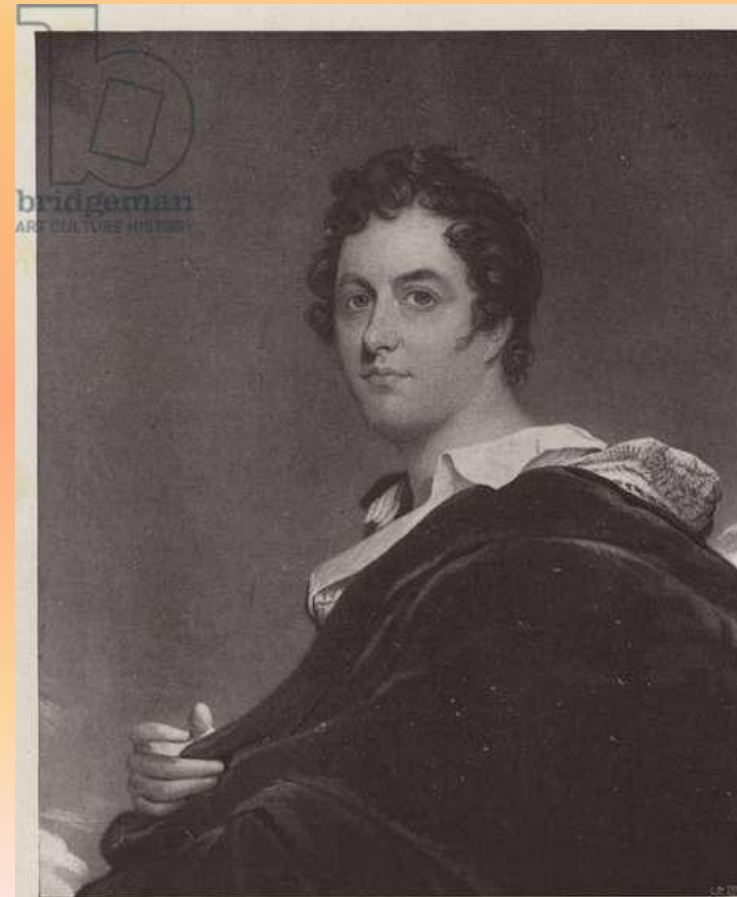


When his father died in 1784, young Byron together with his brother Gilbert, rented a farm near Mauchline; but this was never a great financial success, and he toyed with the idea of moving to Jamaica in the West



Success

However, in 1786, his first works were published under the title "*Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*". These included works such as 'To a Mouse' and 'The Holy Fair'. The critical reception and relative success of this publication encouraged Burns to remain in Scotland and he moved to Edinburgh where he became involved in the thriving cultural scene. He was also initiated into the Masons and became the poet laureate of the Edinburgh Freemasons.

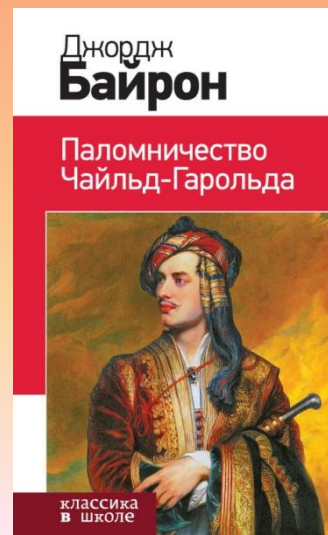


LORD BYRON, AT THE AGE OF THIRTY-FOUR.
From an Old Painting by West.

Works

His reputation led to a commission to work on a collection of Scottish folk songs. Burns collected a rich diversity of Scottish folk songs, sometimes improving upon them and also including his own. These were published as **'The Scots Musical Museum'** in five volumes over a period of sixteen years.

This compilation included a reworking of **'Auld Lang Syne'** which later became a famous global song, usually sung on New Year's Eve.



Famous Song

“Should auld acquaintance be forgot
and never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot
and days of auld lang syne?
For auld lang syne, my dear,
for auld lang syne,
we’ll take a cup of kindness yet,
for auld lang syne.”



Family Life

In 1788, Burns married Jean Armour and together they had nine children. However, he also had a string of affairs and lovers, such as Mary Campbell.



Political Activity

Burns was also a political writer and was considered a radical for his forthright views on republicanism. In **1795**, he was moved by the events of the French revolution and its clarion call for equality.



Death

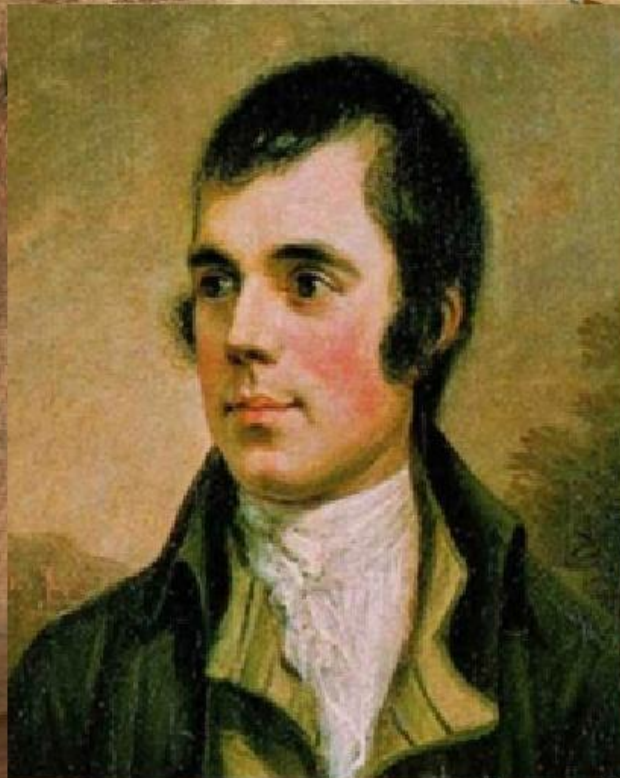
He died one year later on **July 21, 1796**, of rheumatic fever. He was buried in St Michael's Dumfries.



During his lifetime, he was well known but gained little financial compensation for his works. However, after his death, his reputation blossomed and he became an icon of Scottish culture.



Burns Night – a night for all Scots





Burns Night



Burns Night, a second national day in Scotland, is celebrated on the 25-th of January with Burns suppers around the world. First come general announcements, the Grace, then come the piping and cutting of the haggis. The reading called “The immortal memory” is given. The next event is the singing of “Auld Land Syne”.

First of all, the host says a few words to welcome everyone to the supper and opens the meal with a reading of “The Selkirk Grace”.



Guests then stand as a bagpiper pipes music to welcome the star attraction of the supper – the haggis, a sheep’s stomach stuffed with the sheep’s heart, liver and lungs



Next, an invited reader recites Burns' poem "To a Haggis" and cuts open the haggis with a sharp knife. Everyone then toasts the haggis by raising their glasses and shouting: 'To the Haggis!'



The evening always ends with everyone joining hands and singing Burns' world-famous song 'Auld Lang Syne', meaning 'For Times Gone By'.



