

Burns Supper Companion

Nancy Marshall

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In 1801, some five years after Robert Burns' death, nine of his friends sat down to dinner in what is now known as Burns Cottage in Alloway. By then an inn, it was in the 'auld clay biggin' where Robert Burns had been born that the first Burns Supper took place. They gathered to celebrate his extraordinary life and to gave thanks for his friendship. It was a simple evening, where they reminisced about his work, sang a few songs, roared with laughter remembering the fiery barbs from his skelpin' tongue, made speeches and drank toasts to his memory. Little did they know that this fellowship and remembrance would resonate down through the centuries and span all across the world. Over the years, the informal theme from that evening has developed into the mystical ritual known as Burns Night. The traditional format of the evening is laid out in Burns Supper Companion according to the Burns Federation and some of the oldest Burns clubs in existence. This fascinating insight into the traditions surrounding Burns Night includes a biography of Robert Burns, poems, songs and quotations, simple speeches and even a recipe for haggis. It is the essential guide for anyone intending to hold or attend a Burns Night of any size or ilk, or for those who simply have a keen interest in Burns and the great traditions that have been laid into place in his honor.



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