

# Scotland's favourite son *Robert Burns*

Vodyanitskaya Anastasia  
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# Biography

- **Robert Burns** is the best known of the poets who have written in the **Scots language**, although much of his writing is also in English and a light **Scots dialect**, accessible to an audience beyond Scotland.
- **Robert Burns** was born in a house built by his father (now the ***Burns Cottage Museum***), where he lived until Easter **1766**, when he was seven years old. Here Burns grew up in poverty and hardship, and the severe manual labour of the farm left its traces in a premature stoop and a weakened constitution.

# First attempt at poetry

- By the age of **15**, Burns was the principal labourer at **Mount Oliphant**. During the harvest of **1774**, he was assisted by **Nelly Kilpatrick (1759–1820)**, who inspired his first attempt at poetry, "**O, Once I Lov'd A Bonnie Lass**".
- In the summer of **1775**, he was sent to finish his education with a tutor at Kirkoswald, where he met **Peggy Thompson (b.1762)**, to whom he wrote two songs, "**Now Westlin' Winds**" and "**I Dream'd I Lay**".

- The poverty of Burns' early life, though far from being overcome, had produced in him a supporter of the French Revolution and a rebel against both Calvinism and the social order of his time.

# Fall in love

- At about the same time, Burns fell in love with **Mary Campbell (1763–1786)**, whom he had seen in church while he was still living in **Tarbolton**. He dedicated the poems "**The Highland Lassie O**", "**Highland Mary** 🔔", and "**To Mary in Heaven**" to her.
- His song "**Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary, And leave auld Scotia's shore?** 🔔" suggests that they planned to emigrate to Jamaica together. Their relationship has been the subject of much conjecture.

# Kilmarnock Edition

- On 31 July 1786 John Wilson published the volume of works by Robert Burns, *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish dialect*. Known as the **Kilmarnock** volume, it sold for 3 shillings and contained much of his best writing, including "**The Twa Dogs**", "**Address to the Deil**", "**Halloween**", "**The Cotter's Saturday Night**", "**To a Mouse**", "**Epitaph for James Smith**", and "**To a Mountain Daisy**", many of which had been written at **Mossgiel** farm. The success of the work was immediate, and soon he was known across the country.

***My Heart's in the Highlands*** is a **1789** song and poem by Robert Burns sung to the tune *Failte na Miosg*.

- Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the North,  
The birth-place of Valour, the country of Worth;  
Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,  
The hills of the Highlands for ever I love.

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;  
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer;  
A-chasing the wild-deer, and following the roe,  
My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go.

Farewell to the mountains high covered with snow;  
Farewell to the straths and green valleys below;  
Farewell to the forests and wild-hanging woods;  
Farewell to the torrents and loud-pouring floods.

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;  
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer;  
A-chasing the wild-deer, and following the roe,  
My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go.



# Influence

- Burns became the "**people's poet**" of Russia. In Imperial Russia Burns was translated into Russian and became a source of inspiration for the ordinary, oppressed Russian people. In Soviet Russia, he was elevated as the archetypal poet of the people.



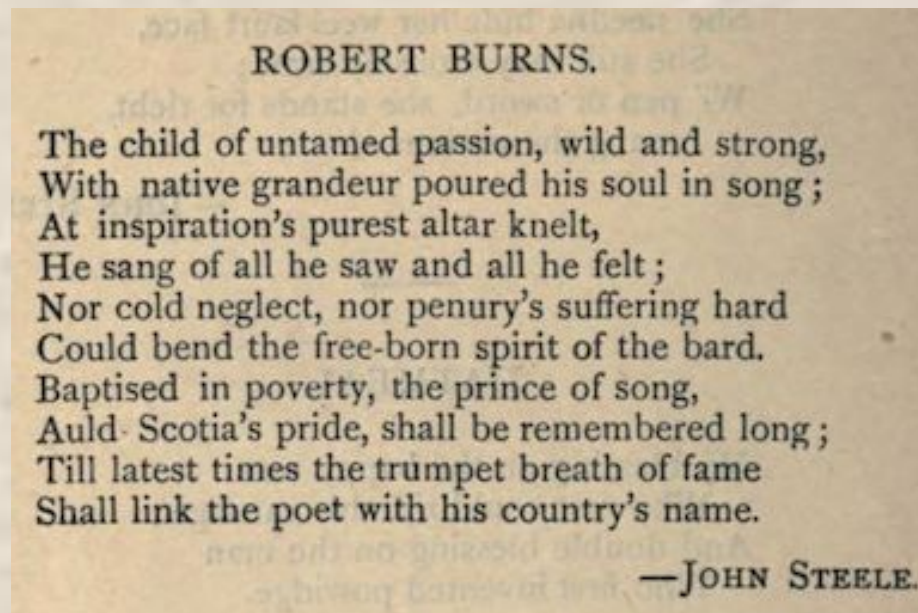


# Stamps and currency

- The **Soviet Union** was the **first country** in the world to honour Burns with a commemorative stamp, marking the 160th anniversary of his death in **1956**.
- In **2009** the **Royal Mint** issued a commemorative two pound coin featuring a quote from "**Auld Lang Syne**".

# Robert Burns Poetry And Songs

- The poetry and songs of Robert Burns is famous throughout the world - so famous, in fact, that some lines from his poems have become commonplace sayings.



# Sources:

- **Biography:**

- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert\\_Burns](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Burns)
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/robertburns/biography.shtml>
- <http://www.poemhunter.com/robert-burns/biography/>

- **Poetry:**

- <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/robert-burns>
- <http://www.poemhunter.com/robert-burns/>

Thanks for watching!