



REGION RHINE-MAIN

BURNS SUPPER FRANKFURT 2016

Had Robert Burns been alive to attend the 9th Frankfurt Rhine-Main Region Burns Supper, he would have been quite surprised. For one thing, the event was officiated by two members of the Robert Burns Guild of Speakers, which has only 37 members – one for each year of Burns' life. And for another, the Immortal Memory speech devoted to the life and works of "Rabbie" Burns was given by a woman, Alison Walker. Far from writhing in his grave, he would probably have been mulling over how to charm the attractive BBC sports reporter and fervid Burns admirer. As Alison insisted during her speech, his thoughts and works were as relevant and exciting today as they had ever been, which is why they are still celebrated every year by millions of people in over 180 countries around the globe.

The high point of the traditional bill of fare was the haggis. Accompanied by bagpipes and drums (played by a female drummer) the "puddin'" – as Burns describes it in his "Address to the Haggis" – was ceremonially paraded through the hall, perched in a bower of greenery and roses. The well-known address was delivered by Neil Macgillivray, who took care to remove the oversized sausage from its nest so that all might see him sinking his knife into it, declaiming: "And cut you up, wi' ready slight" at the climax of the rousing speech. Later, the Immortal Memory was followed by the Toast to the Lassies, delivered by Paul Cow-

lan, poet, musician and allround admirer of the ladies, and the classic Response to the Laddies by Susie Kil, a keen attendee of Frankfurt Burns Suppers past.

In keeping with tradition, space was then cleared for the Scottish dancing, ably led by the Frankfurt Scottish Country Dancing Society. At the end, the assembled gathering joined together to sing Auld Lang Syne. The minstrelsy was provided by Craig Herbertson and Paul Cowlan wandering among the tables, singing a selection of Scottish and other songs.

The evening's generous sponsors included The Royal Bank of Scotland, DZ Bank, Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer and Scottish Development International, with donations of single malt whiskies by Pernod Ricard Deutschland (The Glenlivet Reserve) and Moët Hennessy (Glenmorangie), and two air tickets donated as the raffle prize by British Airways. Next year will be the tenth anniversary of this event. Those wishing to attend will need to keep a close eye on the BCCG website for the invitation, which should be uploaded some time in November 2017, as the tickets will no doubt sell out like hot cakes. Or warm haggis.

Susan Tackenberg

Member of the Regional Committee Rhine-Main