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# Geography and Typology of Contemporary Burns Suppers

Paul Malgrati

## Abstract

This piece features an unprecedented, quantitative analysis of contemporary Burns Suppers. It is based on the broadest, most detailed database of Burns Suppers ever built since the nineteenth century, comprising more than 2,500 contemporary events across 145 countries. Such a wealth of data lends itself to a survey of Burns Night's various settings, comparing diverse approaches to Burns's poetry, Scottish culture, music, and food. Indeed, at the heart of this article lies a typology of Burns Suppers, distinguishing four main types of events —'ritualistic', 'Celtic', 'gastronomic', and 'social'. Challenging common perceptions of the Burns Supper as a traditionalist, ceremonious feast, these categories provide an initial blueprint for any further study of Burns Suppers in the twenty first century.

**Keywords:** Robert Burns, Burns Supper, Scottish identity, Scottish diaspora, haggis, quantitative analysis

## Prologue: A Global Feast

In the midst of southern-hemisphere summer, on Burns Night 2020, a hundred guests gathered at the residence of Karen Bell, British High Commissioner in Vanuatu.<sup>1</sup> Around 7pm (10:00 UTC), they were ushered indoors to the sound of a rather unusual music, rarely heard on the shores of this South Pacific archipelago. Ghurka Pipers, from the Singapore Police Force, had flown over for the occasion and their music filled Melanesia's sky with unfamiliar Scottish airs.

Three hours later and more than 4,200 miles north west, the pipes had now ceased in Taipei's Grand Hyatt Hotel, as guests of the local British Chamber of Commerce focussed on a full-bodied rendition of Robert Burns's 'Address to a Haggis'. Their polite effort was repeated around 7.30pm (07:00 UTC) in Thailand, by members of the St Andrews Society of Bangkok, whose chieftain had just knifed 'the gushing entrails bright' of Scotland's national dish. Such boisterous, stabbing noises, crossing deserts, glens, mountains, and seas, were echoed another 3,200 miles away, at the Dilmun Club's Burns Night near Janabiyah in Bahrain. They were heard simultaneously in Russia, at Moscow's Robert Burns Pub, where a bilingual 'Address' featured in both Scots and Russian.

Half an hour later and nineteen degrees south, there was no haggis left at the Fethiye Rotary Club in Turkey. As empty plates returned to the kitchen, guests readied themselves for the evening's principal toast to Burns's 'Immortal Memory'. The task befell Alasdair Hutton, the co-founder of the Robert Burns World Federation Guild of Speakers, who raised his glass to thunderous applause. Many similar, solemn speeches were heard that same night, from the Mediterranean to the Channel and Irish Seas. Around 9pm (GMT), after-dinner eloquence now reached the wintry West Coast of Scotland, at Alloway's Burns Club, where Jimmy Gibson, past President of the Burns Federation, invited his audience to remember the poet born locally, 261 years ago.

Speeches could only last so long, however, and more than 3,000 miles south, at the Caledonian Society of Ghana, the time had now come for a dance to the tune of 'Skara Scottish Ceilidh Band'. The riotous reel of Ghanese Caledonians, many of whom attempted Scottish country steps for the very first time, had soon echoed across the Atlantic Ocean. Five hours later, it swept over Quito, Ecuador's capital, where clients of the St Andrews Gastro Pub, accompanied by the local British school, eased digestion by practising the 'Gay Gordon'. Their tentative steps found countless followers throughout the Americas. From the Costa Rica Country Club and Cuba's British Embassy to the American Scottish Foundation in New York, the Montana Reel & Strathspey Society, and Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, two continents were a-reeling.

Midnight had passed in Hawaii (-10:00 UTC), 2,000 nautical miles from America's shores, when local Caledonians crossed arms and joined hands in memory of 'Auld Lang Syne'. Honolulu's feast had been eventful, with poetry recitals, a demonstration of Scottish claymores, a contest for the man with the best-looking, kilted knees, and live music by the 'MacFerris Bueller Band'. Yet, at last, the time had come to leave and bid one another goodbye before the

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<sup>1</sup> All Burns Suppers mentioned in this article feature on Paul Malgrati, Brian Aitken, 'Interactive Map of Burns Suppers', Centre for Robert Burns Studies, University of Glasgow (2021), <https://burnsc21.glasgow.ac.uk/supper-map/> [accessed on 15 May 2021]. All sources can be traced on the 'Interactive Map' by clicking on the link 'Find out More', below each event. The dataset of this map, on which this article is based, can be accessed from Enlighten, the data repository of the University of Glasgow. See Paul Malgrati, 'Database of the Interactive Map of Burns Suppers', <http://dx.doi.org/10.5525/gla.researchdata.1144> [Last accessed on 15 May 2021].

crack of dawn. In a few hours, sunrise would wake Vanuatu islanders, more than 24 hours after the last Ghurkha was heard.

## Introduction

The first Burns Supper was held in July 1801, at Burns's birthplace, as nine freemasons, 'auld acquaintances' or admirers of the poet, held a private dinner to remember his 'departed genius'. Who could have imagined then, that within two centuries, their humble feast would spread across the entire world?<sup>2</sup> More than a celebration of Scottish identity, literature, and gastronomy, the Burns Supper has become one of Scotland's most significant contributions to global culture in the twenty-first century.

Such a worldwide, multicultural profile is relatively new, however, and should not be taken for granted. According to Clark McGinn, author of a *Comprehensive History* of the Burns Supper, the poet's birthday remained a mostly monocultural feast until the second half of the twentieth century.<sup>3</sup> Marked by the formal pageantry of Burns Clubs, masonic lodges, and Caledonian Societies, its outreach was limited beyond Britain's Empire and the Anglosphere.<sup>4</sup> This situation began to change as recently only as the 1980-90s, at which point Burns Suppers ventured into new directions. More research is needed to explain this diversification. For now, however, suffice to say that major factors including—but not limited to—the development of mass tourism, the growth of international education, the rise of entertainment, the broadening of Scotland's diaspora, the increasing politicisation of Scottish identity, and the 'commodification of Burns' in post-Devolution Scotland, are likely to account for Burns Night's appeal in the contemporary, global era.<sup>5</sup>

The global surge of the twenty-first century Burns Supper was first recorded in January 2009, on Burns's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary, when the whisky company Famous Grouse listed more than 3,500 celebrations, across 80 countries, and with an estimated 9 million participants.<sup>6</sup> Building on these figures, with a closer survey of January haggis and whisky sales, current estimates put annual participation in Burns Night at 9.5 million, with around 2,300 public events in Scotland and 9,000 globally.<sup>7</sup> Certainly, such approximations cannot account for the unrecordable amount of private, homely, or informal Burns Suppers. Nonetheless, they provide us with a

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<sup>2</sup> The history of the first Burns Supper has been narrated by Clark McGinn, in *The Burns Supper: A Comprehensive History*, (Edinburgh: Luath, 2018), pp.37-51.

<sup>3</sup> McGinn, *Ibid*, especially pp.194-211.

<sup>4</sup> This is what McGinn has termed 'The Bureaucratic Period' in the history of the Burns Supper; see *ibid*, pp.151-174. Regarding Burns's international reception, see Murray Pittock (ed.), *Robert Burns and Global Culture* (Bucknell University Press: Lewisburg, 2011) and *The Reception of Robert Burns in Europe* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014); Sharon Alker, Leith Davis (eds.), *Robert Burns and Transatlantic Culture* (Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge, 2012).

<sup>5</sup> The impact of international tourism is raised by McGinn, p.207 whilst the rise of entertainment is mentioned by Lauren Brancaz-McCartan, 'The Twenty-First-Century Burns Supper –a Constantly Evolving Tradition?', *Burns Chronicle*, Vol.131, (2021/2). See also, Murray S. Leith and Duncan Sim (ed.), *The Modern Scottish Diaspora. Contemporary Debates and Perspectives* (Edinburgh: EUP, 2014). The 'commodification of Burns' was analysed by Josephine Dougal, 'Robert Burns and the Re-Making of National Memory in Contemporary Scotland.' *Authorship*, 1.2, (2012), p.8.

<sup>6</sup> Burns Suppers were added by participants on an interactive map, hosted by Famous Grouse on the (now deceased) website [www.burnssupper2009.com](http://www.burnssupper2009.com). See Clark McGinn, *The Burns Supper*, p.209.

<sup>7</sup> These estimates were produced by McGinn, p.215 and by Murray Pittock and Joel Ambroisine, 'Robert Burns and the Scottish Economy', Centre for Robert Burns Studies, University of Glasgow (2019), [https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/Media\\_707867\\_smxx.pdf](https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/Media_707867_smxx.pdf) [accessed on 2 March 2021], pp.49-50.

tangible order of magnitude when considering the more organised, public, and social facet of Burns Night.

In 2020, the Centre for Robert Burns Studies (CRBS), at the University of Glasgow, launched a two-year research project into the past and present of Burns Suppers. Supervised by Gerard Carruthers, with assistance from the present author, this new endeavour aims to sound the depth of the contemporary Burns movement, drilling into what McGinn has termed the ‘iceberg-like’ weight of Burns Night material.<sup>8</sup> In January 2021, the project led to the publication of an ‘Interactive World Map of Burns Suppers’, detailing the setting, menu, order of ceremony, entertainment, music, attendance, and dress code, of 2,509 contemporary Burns Suppers across 148 countries.<sup>9</sup> These include 2,139 events from 2020 as well as 266 from 2019 and only a fraction from the year 2018 or earlier (113), reaching no further back than 2009 for areas with rarer Burns activities. Based on a spreadsheet featuring more than 65,000 cells, the map’s database provides the broadest, most-detailed record of Burns Supper activities since James Ballantine’s 1859 *Chronicle of the Hundredth Birthday of Robert Burns*.<sup>10</sup>

This article will present the map’s core findings. After shedding light on the geography and the general characteristics of global Burns celebrations, it will group contemporary suppers into key categories. This typology aims to emphasise the diversity of the twenty-first century Burns movement. It will distinguish between four types of suppers —‘ritualistic’, ‘Celtic’, ‘gastronomic’, and ‘social’— contrasting their levels of formality, their number of speeches, and their approaches to Scottish culture, music, food, and drink.<sup>11</sup> Inevitably, such classification has its limits and categories are bound to be porous. Contemporary suppers follow a remarkably fluid format and to demonstrate this is a chief purpose of the present study. Rather than diminishing the variety of Burns Night activities by dissecting their main elements, the following typology aims to refine contemporary readings of the Burns movement beyond impressionistic figures and simplistic generalisations.

Overall, the ensuing pages complement recent qualitative studies by presenting the first quantitative survey of the global Burns Supper. Following Clark McGinn’s *History*, Josephine Dougal’s essay on Burns Night advertisement, and Lauren Brancaz-McCartan’s questionnaire-based analysis of contemporary Burns Suppers, they offer unprecedented insight into the composition, geography, and diversity of the Scottish and international Burns movement in the early twenty-first century.<sup>12</sup>

## Limitations

Before diving into data analysis, however, it is worth signalling the limits of the sample studied. Certainly, the 2,509 suppers comprising the map’s database are not representative of the entire Burns movement. According to estimates, and despite its stretching over several years, the database accounts for only one quarter of all public suppers held annually.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> McGinn, p.369.

<sup>9</sup> Malgrati, Aitken, ‘Interactive Map of Burns Suppers’.

<sup>10</sup> James Ballantine, *Chronicle of the Hundredth Birthday of Robert Burns* (Edinburgh & London: A. Fullerton & Co, 1859).

<sup>11</sup> Wherever applicable, all proportions and ratios used in this article have been checked with a Chi-squared test.

<sup>12</sup> McGinn, *A Comprehensive History*; Josephine Dougal, ‘In His Name: Burns Night Event Advertisements’, *Burns Chronicle*, Vol.130, (2021/1), pp.1-24; Brancaz-McCartan, ‘The Twenty-First-Century Burns Supper’. It is worth mentioning that events studied in this article took place before the COVID-19 pandemic. At the time of writing (Spring 2021), it is still unclear whether global Burns activities, halted in January 2021, will recover their pre-crisis level before many years.

<sup>13</sup> ‘Public supper’ refers to any Burns Supper open to guests and/or clients and held outside a private home.

Moreover, the nature of data collection means this sample entails certain limitations and unavoidable biases. 95% of the database was built through a manual, online search applying keywords ‘Burns Supper’ and ‘Burns Night’ on thousands of international locations.<sup>14</sup> Information was then amassed from various online sources, including Burns Supper invites on social media or events websites, club or society pages or networks, news articles, online forums, Facebook posts, tweets, and YouTube videos. In other words, little information was obtained directly from Burns Supper hosts or participants (no more than 5% of the total).<sup>15</sup> Such an approach to data collection, whilst comprehensive, leads to two problematic consequences.

Firstly, it excludes unadvertised, private types of Burns Suppers, which arguably account for most Burns Night activities. This applies especially to small, family Burns Suppers (less than 1% of the database) as well as to events held by more discreet organisations, including, for instance, masonic lodges. Whilst Scotland counts more than 600 lodges, likely to hold annual Burns Suppers, the map features only 113 masonic events.

Secondly, a database relying on indirect, online sources for information runs the risk of being incomplete. This is the case here. Although different entries and various sources were sought for each supper (including 900 photographs and 281 videos embedded into the map), many events still lack significant details. This is the case, for instance, regarding the food served, with only 30% of entries recording several courses when more than 50% are listed as three-course dinners. Similarly, details about Burns songs recited at each event are often missing. The map counts only 64 renditions of ‘A Red, Red Rose’ and 26 of ‘Ae Fond Kiss’, which seems a blatant case of misrepresentation.

That said, even taking such defects into account, the database remains viable. It features complete information for key aspects of all listed events, including the supper’s host, main course, main toast(s), drink(s), and type of entertainment. Furthermore, the map is based on thorough and comprehensive online research about Burns Suppers in more than 10,000 locations, including all world countries, all capital cities and metropolises, each U.S. state, all North American, British, and European cities, all Australasian towns with more than 10,000 inhabitants, and all Scottish towns and villages above 500 residents. This also includes research about all public Burns Clubs listed by the Robert Burns World Federation as well as all known Caledonian and St Andrews Societies. In other words, the present database may represent only the public-facing tip of the Burnsian iceberg—but it is the most detailed cross-section of it ever made.

## **Geography of the International Burns Movement**

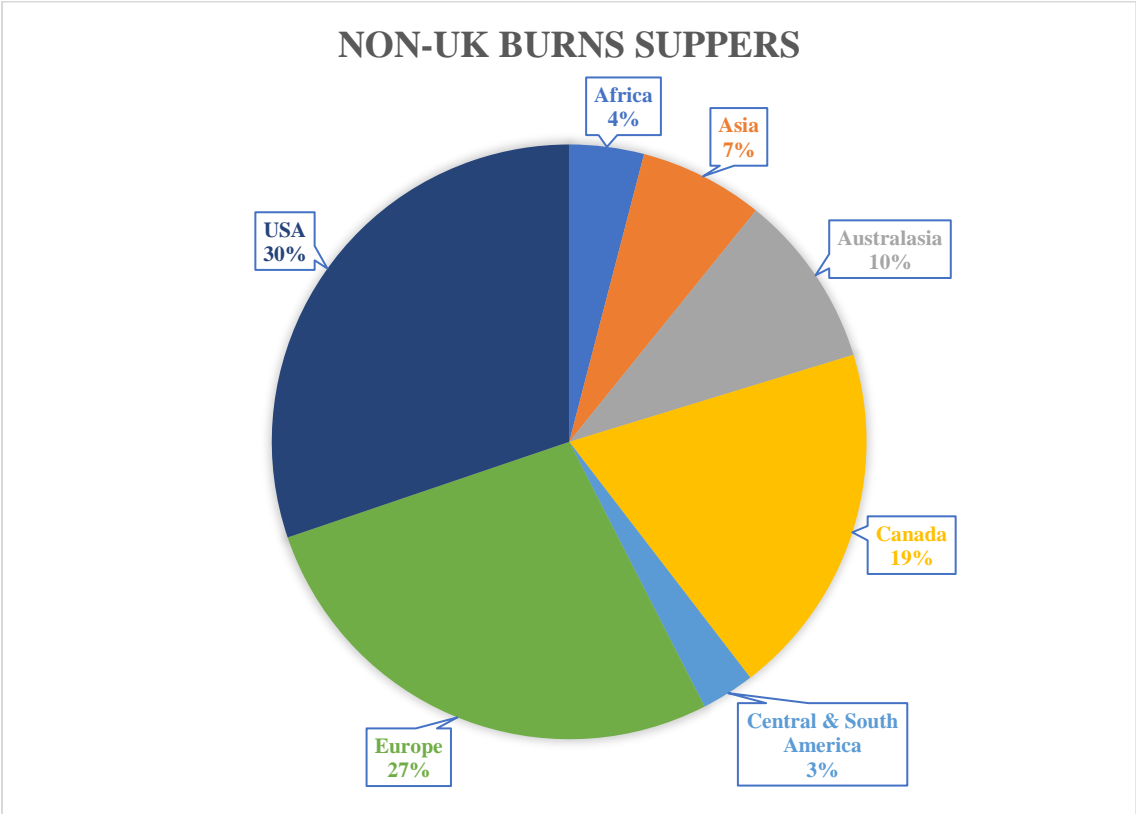
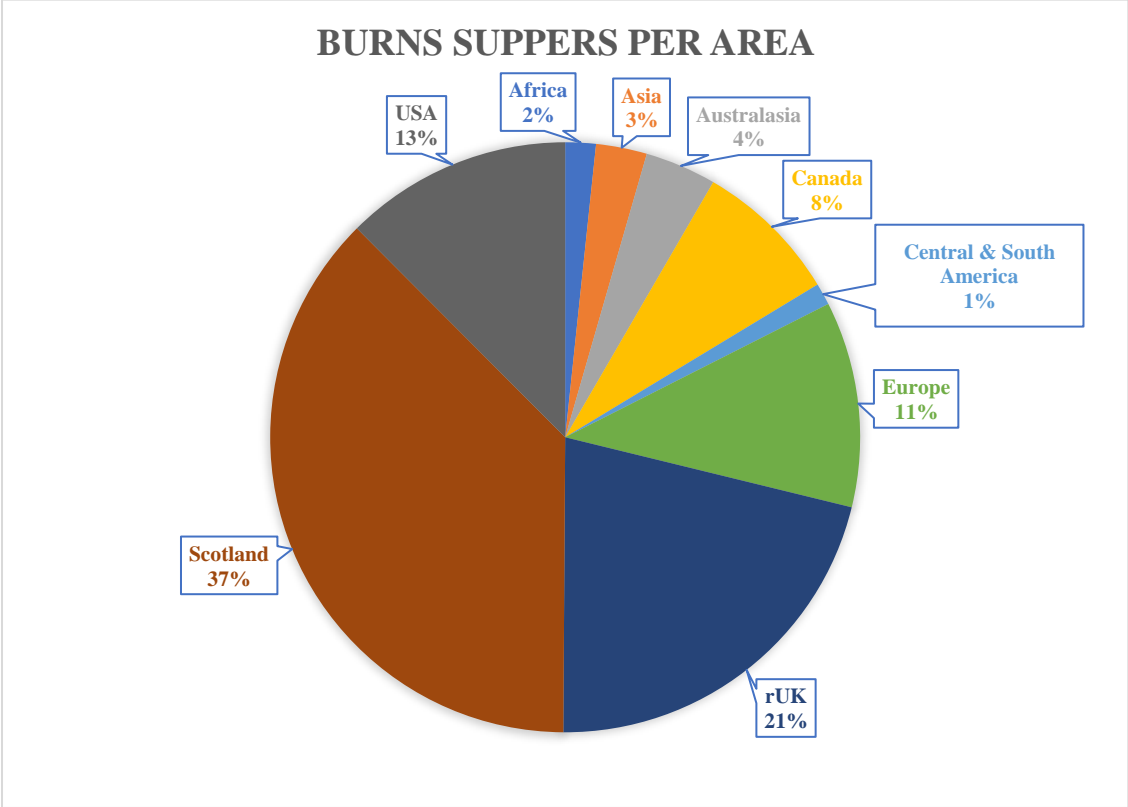
The map records 939 Burns Suppers in Scotland and 466 in the rest of the United Kingdom. It also features 1050 Burns Suppers from overseas, representing 41% of the database. These international suppers are spread across 145 nations, leaving only 50 countries without record of Burns activities since 2009. Such areas include countries at war (Syria, Libya, Congo, Yemen), dictatorships (North Korea, Turkmenistan, Tanzania, Cameroon, etc.) as well as small

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<sup>14</sup> All events with the name ‘Burns Supper’ and/or ‘Burns Night’ were selected as long as they featured speeches, recitations of Burns’s poetry, or at least Scottish food and/or drink.

<sup>15</sup> Information about a total of 80 suppers was submitted directly by participants and/or hosts. Submissions were made via email to the University of Glasgow’s Centre for Robert Burns Studies or through the following Google Form, <https://forms.gle/UH7vUw43U4U2W3XJ7> [accessed on 9 March 2021]. Submissions were sent between April 2020 and February 2021.

states and ex-French or ex-Spanish colonies with few ties to the Anglophone world (Mali, Tunisia, Ivory Coast, Togo, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Nicaragua, Honduras, etc.).



This last point is a reminder of the prominence of the Anglosphere, counting for 63% (666) of all non-UK Burns Suppers (1,050). In this category, the United States comes first, with 30% (313), followed by 19% for Canada (200), 6% for Australia (65), 3% for New Zealand (31), and 1.5% for South Africa (17). Such figures reveal the persisting legacy of Britain's Empire, maintaining a diasporic network of clubs and societies keen to uphold Scottish traditions.<sup>16</sup> This is particularly striking when considering the many international St Andrews or Caledonian societies in the database (243). 75% of these are based in English-speaking countries, representing 17% of all Burns events outside the UK.

However, the Anglosphere's clout should not obscure the more diverse aspect of twenty-first century Burns Suppers. The database lists suppers from 99 countries outside the English-speaking world, including 283 events in Europe (26% of the non-UK total), 60 in Asia (5.5%), 17 in Central or South America (1.5%) and 12 in Africa (1%). The most populated areas include Germany, with 63 events, followed by France with 33, Spain with 22, Switzerland with 16, Russia with 15, and Japan with 10. Representing 34% of non-UK events, such multicultural Burns Suppers testify to Burns Night's profound diversification in the last few decades. This is in sharp contrast with the early days of the Burns movement. Of all the 3,500 Burns Suppers listed by Clark McGinn for the period 1801-1859, only 7 were hosted outside the Anglosphere (all in Europe).<sup>17</sup> Considering this, and whilst more recent data is lacking, it seems that Burns Suppers are now spread further than at any point in history.

### **The Global Burns Supper: A Quantitative Definition**

Despite an increasing diversification, British and international Burns Suppers remain united by three core components. Almost every supper, wherever it is held, will showcase Scottish haggis (94.5% of the total), whisky (83.7%), and a recitation of Burns's 'To a Haggis' (80.6%). These three aspects, already present at the inaugural Burns Supper of July 1801, are the most significant features of the database.<sup>18</sup> Together, they provide a basic definition of the global Burns Supper, as a celebration of Scottish gastronomy and of a poet remembered primarily for his patriotic praise of Scottish food and drink. In other words, Scottish food patriotism remains the key marker of contemporary Burns Supper.<sup>19</sup>

Beyond this point, however, there is no clear feature shaping the database. Other items or speeches commonly associated with the Burns Supper, including the 'Immortal Memory' toast, the 'Toast to the Lassies', bagpipe, and Scottish country dance respectively account for only 47%, 44%, 54.5%, and 21% of all sampled events. To explain such variations, from formal to informal settings and from gourmet to more literary themes, it is necessary to distinguish between the types of hosts and, ultimately, between the types of suppers structuring the global Burns movement.

### **Types and Geography of Burns Supper Hosts**

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<sup>16</sup> Regarding the history of Scottish diasporic associationism, see Tanja Bueltmann, *Clubbing Together: Ethnicity, Civility and Formal Sociability in the Scottish Diaspora to 1930* (Liverpool: LUP, 2014).

<sup>17</sup> See McGinn's 'Appendices' to his *Comprehensive History*, pp.401-455.

<sup>18</sup> McGinn, *Ibid.*, pp.37-51.

<sup>19</sup> The importance of Scottish food patriotism during the eighteenth century and its influence on the invention of the Burns Supper are discussed in McGinn, *Ibid.* pp.252-284 and in the present issue of the *Burns Chronicle*, Astuko Ichijo, 'How Haggis has Become Scottish: The Burns Supper and the Maintenance of National Identity'.



As illustrated in Table 1, hosts listed in the database can be sorted into 18 categories. Most of these form rather straightforward units, defined by a clear activity or purpose. However, some groups might require further explanations. Firstly, the category ‘Community Association or Social Club’ (11%) represents all local organisations dedicated to supporting the life of a particular community, from country clubs and village halls to councils, Rotary clubs, local development trusts and support groups. Secondly, ‘Cultural or Arts Venue’ encompasses a range of public institutions and private companies, from museums and council libraries to theatres and concert halls. Thirdly, ‘Scottish or Celtic Society’ (13,6%) brings together organisation with a broad Scottish (or Celtic) interest that comprises but is not limited to Robert Burns. These include St Andrews Societies and Caledonian Clubs as well as Scottish country dance clubs and a few American ‘Irish’ societies. Finally, the category ‘Other’ represents a few private Burns Suppers as well as some more atypical events, including, for instance, Burns Night street festivals by Ayr and Perth City Councils, a ‘Desert Burns Night’ held by the tour company Xpedition in Arabia in the United Arab Emirates, and a small haggis supper shared by Antarctica-based scientists in 2013.

*Table 1: Burns Supper Hosts*

<b>Type of Host</b>	<b>Number (Percentage)</b>
Army or Veteran Association	37 (1,5%)
Burns Society	135 (5,40%)
Business or Professional Association	41 (1,6%)
Charity or Charity Sponsor	48 (1,9%)
Church	67 (2,6%)
Community Association or Social Club	288 (11,5%)
Cultural or Arts Venue	137 (5,4%)
Embassy or Chamber of Commerce	65 (2,6%)
Hotel, Bar or Restaurant	703 (28%)
Masonic Lodge	113 (4,5%)
Other	30 (1,2%)
Political Group	58 (2,3%)
School	106 (4,2%)
Scottish Folk or Pipe Band	99 (3,9%)
Scottish or Celtic Society	341 (13,6%)
Sports Association	144 (5,7%)
University or Students Association	49 (1,9%)
Whisky Society or Distillery	48 (1,9%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2509</b>

Whilst all categories include hosts from outside Britain, some groups are more international than others. Unsurprisingly, Burns Suppers held by embassies, chambers of commerce, and Scottish or Celtic societies are almost exclusively international (with 89% of overseas suppers in both cases, according to Table 2). Likewise, whisky societies, Scottish folk or pipe bands, and veteran associations (mostly composed of Canadian and British legionaries) are often based overseas. On the other hand, Burns Suppers by Burns clubs, community halls, charities, political groups, church parishes, schools, professional and sports associations remain markedly British. This hints at the more tightly local nature of the native Burns movement, where Burns Night appears as a key feature of the social, voluntary calendar.

*Table 2: Geography of Burns Supper Hosts*

Type of Host	Overseas	rUK	Scotland
Army or Veteran Association	67,5%	10,8%	21,6%
Burns Society	24,4%	1,4%	74%
Business or Professional Association	9,7%	14,6%	75,6%
Charity or Charity Sponsor	29,1%	20,8%	50%
Church	22,3%	30%	47,7%
Community Association or Social Club	20,1%	19%	60,7%
Cultural or Arts Venue	35%	29,2%	35,7%
Embassy or Chamber of Commerce	89,2%	3%	7,7%
Hotel, Bar or Restaurant	34,2%	35%	30,4%
Masonic Lodge	47,7%	13,2%	39%
Other	63,3%	16,6%	20%
Political Group	3,4%	29,3%	67%
School	14,1%	7,5%	78,3%
Scottish Folk or Pipe Band	72,7%	18%	9,3%
Scottish or Celtic Society	89,1%	9%	1,7%
Sports Association	15,3%	21,5%	63,1%
University or Students Association	47%	18,3%	34,7%
Whisky Society or Distillery	75%	12,5%	12,5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>41,57%</b>	<b>21,00%</b>	<b>37,43%</b>

## The Ritualistic Burns Supper

Groups of hosts provide adequate material with which to build a broader typology. By contrasting their various approaches to Burns Night's ritual, entertainment, foodstuff, and sociability, it is possible to gain a defter vision of the international Burns movement—one nuancing common assumptions about Burns Night.

The first of these preconceptions relates to the so-called 'Burnsian' nature of Burns Suppers. Indeed, since the nineteenth century, the term, 'Burnsian', has served to conflate Burns enthusiasts with Burns supper attendees in a rather indiscriminate manner. On occasion, the word also carries pejorative undertones, disparaging so-called 'Burnsians' for their picky interest in Burns's life, obliviousness to other poets, and sternly traditionalist nature, verging on cultish 'bardolatry'. Such a caricatural view, nurtured by Scottish poet Hugh MacDiarmid and radical nationalists during the twentieth century, still influences present perceptions of Burns Suppers—including works by scholars studying Burns in a more dispassionate light.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> On Hugh MacDiarmid's attacks against Burnsian 'bardolatry', see Robert Crawford, 'MacDiarmid, Burnsians, and Burns legacy' *Burns and Other Poets*, David Sergeant, Fiona Stafford (eds) (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), pp. 182–94; Paul Malgrati, 'MacDiarmid's Burns: The Political Context (1917-1928)', *Scottish Literary Review*, 11/1 (2019), pp.47-66. A classic piece of scholarship inspired by MacDiarmid's criticism can be found in Richard J. Finlay, 'The Burns Cult and Scottish identity in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', in Kenneth Simpson (ed.), *Love & Liberty: Robert Burns* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1997), pp.69-78.

This is even the case with Clark McGinn’s *History of Burns Suppers*: a book that simultaneously debunks MacDiarmid’s criticism yet assumes a degree of traditionalism, as well as a certain level of engagement with Burns’s memory, from most contemporary Burns Supper hosts. McGinn’s conclusion, for instance, claims that the ‘key elements’ inherited from the nineteenth-century Burns Supper, including the ‘Address to a Haggis’, the ‘Immortal Memory’ speech, and the performance of Burns songs and poems, ‘remain the core features of the celebration today’.<sup>21</sup> While this is true for the ‘Address’, however, as previously mentioned, the ‘Immortal Memory’ speech features in only 47% of suppers listed in the database — a proportion pointing to a more nuanced reality.

*Table 3: ‘Immortal Memory’ Speeches per Type of Host*

Type of Host	Without ‘Immortal Memory’	With ‘Immortal Memory’
Army or Veteran Association	17 (46%)	20 (54,%)
Burns Society	11 (8%)	124 (92%)
Business or Professional Association	6 (14,6%)	35 (85,3%)
Charity or Charity Sponsor	18 (37,5%)	30 (62,5%)
Church	33 (49,2%)	34 (50,7%)
Community Association or Social Club	134 (46,5%)	154 (53,4%)
Cultural or Arts Venue	95 (69,3%)	42 (30,6%)
Embassy or Chamber of Commerce	26 (40%)	39 (60%)
Hotel, Bar or Restaurant	592 (84,2%)	111 (15,8%)
Masonic Lodge	23 (20%)	90 (80%)
Other	17 (56,6%)	13 (43,3%)
Political Group	9 (15,5%)	49 (84,4%)
School	49 (46,2%)	57 (53,7%)
Scottish Folk or Pipe Band	59 (59,6%)	40 (40,4%)
Scottish or Celtic Society	118 (34,6%)	223 (65,4%)
Sports Association	58 (40,2%)	86 (59,7%)
University or Students Association	19 (38,8%)	30 (61,2%)
Whisky Society or Distillery	41 (85,4%)	7 (14,5%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>1325 (52,8%)</b>	<b>1184 (47,2%)</b>

Admittedly, the ‘Immortal Memory’ speech — a long oration, building on the supper’s gastronomic context to cultivate a learned interest in Burns’s lifework — is the most ‘Burnsian’ trope of the Burns Supper. According to Table 3, however, it is widespread amongst only four types of hosts: Burns societies (92%), masonic lodges (80%), business or professional associations (85%), and political groups (84%). Significantly, these categories are also much more likely to involve a greater number of toasts, with 35% of them featuring more than four speeches compared to an average 4% of other events.

Such results are rather unsurprising. Burns societies are the historical driver behind the Burns movement; they are dedicated to the promotion of Burns’s work, and keen to uphold a ritual codified by their predecessors since the Victorian era.<sup>22</sup> Likewise, masonic lodges are

<sup>21</sup> McGinn, p.369.

<sup>22</sup> See McGinn, pp.151-174.

traditional vehicles for Burns-related activities. Robert Burns belonged to freemasonry and so did all participants in the inaugural, 1801 Burns Supper. Today, many lodges belong to the Robert Burns World Federation and, more broadly, their ritualistic, rhetorical gravitas lend themselves to solemn, studious Burns celebrations. Such formal, oratorical tendencies are also evident in political and professional types of Burns Suppers. Although neither of these is hosted by traditional ‘Burnsian’ organisations, they share with Burns societies and masonic lodges a sense of ceremonious hierarchy. Deference is often shown to speakers, whose elected or executive status allows for a more earnest approach to Burns’s verse and anniversary. In other words, masonic, political, professional, and Burns clubs’ Burns Suppers, representing 14% of the database, are the only few types that conform to the widespread view of Burns Night as a ritualistic, Burns-heavy affair. Whilst other hosts may also embrace after-dinner formalities — including embassies and some Scottish societies— rarely do their events feature similar levels of pageantry.

Considered together, in comparison with other Burns Suppers, ‘ritualistic’ events reveal further traits. Overall, they appear chiefly monocultural, with 62% of them based in Scotland and less than 5% outside the Anglosphere (compared with 33% and 17%, respectively, for other Burns Suppers). This seems to be reflected by their higher proportion of loyal ‘Toasts to the Queen’ and/or patriotic ‘Toasts to Scotland’ (10% and 12%, respectively, compared with 2% for others). As expected, ‘ritualistic’ suppers are also more likely to feature several Burns poems and songs (58% vs. 32%), including recitations of the lengthy ‘Tam o’ Shanter’ (14,5% vs. 4%) and ‘Holy Willie’s Prayer’ (8% vs. 1.5%). However, their tighter focus on Burns’s works makes them less prone to featuring traditional music (29% vs. 35%) or Scottish country dancing (11% vs. 22%). Similarly, regarding food and drink, ‘ritualistic’ hosts seem more interested in the pith of speeches than in the substance of meals. Whilst most serve ‘haggis, neeps, and tatties’ as a starter or main course (97% vs. 88%), fewer involve Scottish courses beyond the traditional ‘Bill o’ Fare’ of soup, haggis, and cranachan for dessert (15% vs. 25%). Finally, ‘Ritualistic’ suppers often require a more strictly formal dress code (59% vs. 16%) and, whilst drawing denser crowds (with 83 vs. 72 participants on average), some remain continue to exclude women (11% vs. 0.5%).

A representative, albeit mixed-gender, example can be found at the Annual Supper of the Allanton Jolly Beggars Burns Club. Held on 2 February 2020, at the Cambusnethan Miners Social Club, this formal event featured ten toasts, including an ‘Immortal Memory’, a ‘Loyal Toast’, a ‘Toast to the Visitors’, and a ‘Vote of Thanks’, as well as recitations of ‘Holy Willie’s Prayer’ and ‘Tam o’ Shanter’. There was neither dancing nor live music and food was limited to a traditional, three-course dinner with soup and haggis. In similar vein, the supper of Linlithgow’s branch of the Scottish National Party, held on Burns Night 2020, featured a simple haggis meal, accompanied by recitations of ‘Holy Willie’ and ‘A Man’s a Man’ as well as formal toasts by MSPs Joanna Cherry and Michelle Thomson. Such formal, eloquent examples are not limited to Scotland, however, and similar traits could also be found, the same year, at the Burns Supper of the San Francisco Knights of St Andrews. This involved a formal dress code, an ‘Immortal Memory’ speech, a ‘Toast to the Lassies’, seven masonic toasts, recitations of Burns’s poetry, a simple haggis starter, and roast beef for main.

## **The Celtic Burns Supper**

Whilst Scottish country dancing (or any dancing) is absent from most ‘ritualistic’ Burns Suppers, it is a common marker of events building on Burns’s anniversary to provide their guests with a broader Scottish experience. Indeed, the ‘Burnsian’ façade of the Burns movement often hides the role played by other hosts in introducing their guests to further aspects of Scottish culture. Such events, frequently blending Burns’s lowland verse with Gaelic culture, have found in *Cèilidh* dancing a festive counterpoint to Burnsian solemnity.

More research is needed to explore the recent surge of *Cèilidh* as an exportable item of Scottishness.<sup>23</sup> Building on the romanticisation of Scotland’s Celtic past, with a folkish, counter-cultural twist developed since the 1960s Folk Revival, Scottish country dancing has now become a significant trait of Burns Night.<sup>24</sup> According to Table 5, it features at around half of suppers hosted by Scottish or Celtic societies (44%), Scottish folk or pipe band (44%), and universities or students association (51%) —three categories marked by a very international setting, with 95% of Scottish bands and societies located outside Scotland as well as 65% of university events.<sup>25</sup> Considering this, and despite the need for further qualitative research, it might be suggested that *Cèilidh* dancing serves a more informal, inclusive purpose, balancing Burns Night’s patriotic, monocultural aspects with the universal language of music and steps.

**Table 4: *Cèilidh* Dancing per Type of Host**

<b>Type of Host</b>	<b>Without Ceilidh</b>	<b>With Ceilidh</b>
Army or Veteran Association	32 (86,49%)	5 (13,51%)
Burns Society	117 (86,67%)	18 (13,33%)
Business or Professional Association	29 (70,73%)	12 (29,27%)
Charity or Charity Sponsor	30 (62,50%)	18 (37,50%)
Church	53 (79,10%)	14 (20,90%)
Community Association or Social Club	235 (81,60%)	53 (18,40%)
Cultural or Arts Venue	99 (72,26%)	38 (27,74%)
Embassy or Chamber of Commerce	48 (73,85%)	17 (26,15%)
Hotel, Bar or Restaurant	623 (88,62%)	80 (11,38%)
Masonic Lodge	109 (96,46%)	4 (3,54%)
Other	24 (80,00%)	6 (20,00%)
Political Group	52 (89,66%)	6 (10,34%)
School	81 (77,14%)	24 (22,86%)
Scottish Folk or Pipe Band	55 (55,56%)	44 ( <b>44,44%</b> )
Scottish or Celtic Society	189 (55,75%)	150 ( <b>44,25%</b> )
Sports Association	129 (89,58%)	15 (10,42%)
University or Students Association	24 (48,98%)	25 ( <b>51,02%</b> )
Whisky Society or Distillery	47 (97,92%)	1 (2,08%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>78,85%</b>	<b>21,15%</b>

<sup>23</sup> There is currently no history of Scottish country dancing —a topic which is also absent from McGinn’s *History*.

<sup>24</sup> About the revivalist politics of *Cèilidh*, see Sarah Leith, ‘Tied up with pink ribbons’: Repression, counterculture and Scottish national identity, c.1926-1967’, Phd Thesis (University of St Andrews, 2021).

<sup>25</sup> Whilst this leaves another 35% of university events based in Scotland, it should be noted that these are often targeted at international students with a limited awareness of Burns.

This is in sharp contrast with the more ‘ritualistic’, native, and solemn types of Burns Suppers. Whilst several international Scottish societies maintain ties with the Burns Federation, and whilst most (65%) feature an ‘Immortal Memory’ toast at their Burns Supper, their international audience and, more importantly, their broader interest in Scotland’s ‘Celtic’ traditions, sets them apart. Such a syncretic approach to Burns and Gaelic culture is not limited to *Cèilidh* dancing, however. As studied by scholars of Scottish diasporic associations, including Tanja Bueltmann and Celeste Ray, ‘Highlandism’, ‘tartanry’, and bagpiping are long standing attributes of Caledonian and St Andrews societies —whose predecessors were instrumental in promoting a vision of Scottish identity heavily influenced by Walter Scott.<sup>26</sup> In the database, display of Highland culture is evidenced at the Burns Suppers of 21% of Scottish societies, marked by a pipe band concert and/or a demonstration of Highland dancing —a characteristic shared by only 6% of other suppers. To these should be added 60 Burns Suppers hosted by pipe bands, 10 of which also feature Highland Dancing.

Overall, Burns Suppers with significant ‘Celtic’ tropes, from Scottish societies to folk bands, pipe bands, universities, and students’ associations, represent around 20% of the database. They share a few additional traits, not least their higher likelihood to feature Scottish or Irish songs outwith the Burns repertoire (45% vs. 32% for other suppers) as well as their keener multicultural interest, with 8% (vs. 3%) of them incorporating aspects of the host culture as part of the ritual. Moderate in their toasting, they generally favour three or four speeches (52% vs. 34%) and rarely more (7% vs 9%), whilst showing reluctance to skip toasts altogether (8% vs 20%). They are also a little less keen on poetry recitals (31% vs 37%), avoiding Burns’s longer pieces (3% vs. 7%). Similarly to ‘ritualistic’ suppers, nevertheless, they tend to attract larger crowds (84 vs.71 participants on average) whilst serving a relatively straightforward menu, including fewer Scottish dishes beyond the customary ‘Bill o’ Fare’ (14% vs. 26%).

A characteristic case of ‘Celtic’ Burns Supper can be found near Paris, at the Highland Games Club of Saint-Michel-sur-Orge, whose 2020 ‘*Nuit des Ecosseis*’ featured a pipe band concert and a giant *Cèilidh* for more than 100 guests. Serving a traditional ‘Bill o’ Fare’ of cock-a-leekie soup, haggis, neeps, and tatties, and cranachan, the evening was also accompanied by the expected ‘Address to a Haggis’, ‘Immortal Memory’, ‘Toast to the Lassies’ and ‘Toast to the Laddies’. The same year, this format was repeated at the Burns Supper of Moscow’s Caledonian Club, although in richer, multicultural ways. Indeed, the Muscovite event featured a *Cèilidh*, a piping duo, a ‘haggis fare’, four toasts as well as Celtic bodhrán and guitar music. It also included a Russian ballet performance and readings of Burns in Russian translation.

## The Gastronomic Burns Supper

Food patriotism lies at the heart of Burns’s ‘To a Haggis’ —a poem written in 1785, after decades of impassioned, literary polemics about the value and viability of Scottish foodstuff within post-Union Britain.<sup>27</sup> Early Burns diners, by incorporating Burns’s ‘Address’ into the format of the ceremony, also shared a concern for the preservation of Scottish drinks and cooking. This culinary trait marks most suppers in the database, with 95% featuring at least a haggis meal, often accompanied by cock-a-leekie soup for starter, ‘neeps and tatties’ on the

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<sup>26</sup> See Bueltmann, *Clubbing Together* and Celeste Ray, *Highland Heritage. Scottish Americans in the American South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), pp.17-44.

<sup>27</sup> See McGinn, pp.251-259.

side, and cranachan for dessert. Beyond the traditional ‘Bill o’ Fare’, however, there seems to be little food and drinks variety. Indeed, ‘ritualistic’ and ‘Celtic’ hosts appear more interested in poetry, dance, music, and/or Scottish culture than in sampling finer Scottish recipes or whiskies.

Yet this overlooks almost a third of the database, composed of 700 hotels, bars, and restaurants as well as the 48 whisky societies and distilleries. As showed by Table 5, hospitality Burns Suppers are far more likely to enhance the traditional ‘Bill o’ Fare’, with 37.8% of them featuring rarer or more delicate Scottish dishes. These include 105 Scottish seafood dishes, 96 rarer haggis recipes (from Balmoral chicken to haggis bonbons), 55 Cullen skinks, 36 Scottish game food meals, and 155 other Scottish courses (from Angus steaks to ‘cloutie dumplings’). Though probably underestimated due to incomplete menu details in the database, this gastronomic tendency of hospitality Burns Suppers seems corroborated by their higher proportions of both fine dining meals (13.5% vs. 3%) and whisky tasting sessions (16% vs 4%) —a feature unsurprisingly shared by 70% of whisky societies and distilleries.

**Table 5: Other Scottish Dish(es) Beyond Tradition ‘Bill o’ Fare’**

Type of Host	No	Yes
Army or Veteran Association	36 (97,30%)	1 (2,70%)
Burns Society	121 (89,63%)	14 (10,37%)
Business or Professional Association	35 (85,37%)	6 (14,63%)
Charity or Charity Sponsor	43 (89,58%)	5 (10,42%)
Church	65 (97,01%)	2 (2,99%)
Community Association or Social Club	252 (87,50%)	36 (12,50%)
Cultural or Arts Venue	119 (86,86%)	18 (13,14%)
Embassy or Chamber of Commerce	61 (93,85%)	4 (6,15%)
Hotel, Bar or Restaurant	437 (62,16%)	<b>266 (37,84%)</b>
Masonic Lodge	106 (93,81%)	7 (6,19%)
Other	24 (80,00%)	6 (20,00%)
Political Group	50 (86,21%)	8 (13,79%)
School	98 (92,45%)	8 (7,55%)
Scottish Folk or Pipe Band	92 (92,93%)	7 (7,07%)
Scottish or Celtic Society	300 (87,98%)	41 (12,02%)
Sports Association	132 (91,67%)	12 (8,33%)
University or Students Association	48 (97,96%)	1 (2,04%)
Whisky Society or Distillery	44 (91,67%)	4 (8,33%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2063 (82,22%)</b>	<b>446 (17,78%)</b>

Such sophistication comes at a cost, however, and ‘gastronomic’ hosts are overall less likely to pepper their suppers with toasts, poems, and music. As evidenced in Tables 3 and 4, whisky societies and hosts from the hospitality industry are amongst the least keen on both *Cèilidh* dancing (11% vs 21%) and ‘Immortal Memory’ toasting (15% vs 47%). On average, these categories are also more prone to skipping speeches altogether, with 34% of hospitality hosts and 43% of whisky societies or distillery (vs 10% of other Burns Suppers) featuring no



toast at all—not even the ‘Address to a Haggis’. On occasion, in other words, it appears that Scottish culinary delights are enjoyed to the detriment of Burns Night’s poetic pith.

Overall, ‘gastronomic’ Burns Suppers tend to be smaller events (with 60 guests on average vs. 80) with a more casual dress code (92% vs. 64%) —two aspects testifying to their quieter, more intimate, and less official atmosphere. They are also more widespread outside Scotland, representing half of all events held in the rest of Britain and 33% of all overseas Burns Suppers (vs. 23% in Scotland).

A representative case can be found at the Burns Supper of Corrigan’s Mayfair, near Hyde Park, in London. On 25 January 2020, this restaurant served a five-course, fine dining menu, featuring kale and bacon soup, Orkney scallops, Balmoral beef, citrus poached rhubarb, and carrot cake. All courses were paired with single malt Scottish whiskies, including Aberlour, Scapa, Glenlivet, and Chivas drams, as well as by a ‘boozy cranachan cocktail’. Entertainment remained limited throughout the evening, featuring only the haggis ritual and piping. Similarly, that same night, guests of the MacEwan Residence in Edmonton (Canada), listened to a few, brief Burns poems, before focussing on whisky-cured salmon, Cullen skink, haggis, neeps and tatties, venison, cranachan, and shortbread —all paired with six different whiskies.

## The Social Burns Supper

Representing 63% of the database, ‘ritualistic’, ‘Celtic’, and ‘gastronomic’ Burns Suppers are all defined by one or several key aspects of their menus, entertainment, or order of ceremony. Such categories, however, do not seem to fit the database’s remaining 928 events, whose rather average or ordinary features in Tables 3, 4, and 5, resist any straightforward definition. Whilst a different lens might yield finer results, the present study, relying on categories of hosts, seems to be meeting its limits.

Nevertheless, there remains one broader category linking the more local or voluntary types of hosts. Indeed, veteran associations, parishes, community associations, social clubs, charities, and sports associations (23.5% of the database) all display a seemingly social purpose, using Burns’s anniversary as a pretext to maintain or tighten pre-existing relations between guests who share a common interest, cause, experience, or location. Whilst engaging to a degree with Burns’s works, Scottish culture, gastronomy, and the Burns Supper ritual, these more social types of events seem to draw on local, associative ties whose *raison d’être* lies beyond the objects of Burns Night. Certainly, such a definition might also apply to masonic, professional, and political Burns Suppers. But their formal, loquacious pageantry is more likely to interrupt the informal socialisation of guests by deflecting attention on the order of ceremony.

By contrast, ‘social’ Burns Suppers tend to avoid long proceedings. Whilst often featuring at least one or two toasts (88% vs 80%), including 47% of events with the customary ‘Immortal Memory’ and ‘Toast to the Lassies’, they are less likely to incorporate more than four speeches (6% vs 9%). Such moderation is also reflected in a rather average interest in *Cèilidh* dancing (18% vs 22%), Burns poetry readings (36% vs. 36%), and live music (32% vs 35%) —although ‘social’ events seem slightly keener on lighter forms of entertainment, including raffles (7.5% vs. 4.5%) and quiz or games (4% vs 2%). Finally, regarding food and drinks, ‘social’ hosts seem less innovative, with little interest in serving rarer Scottish courses (10% vs 20%) or sampling various types of whiskies (2.5% vs 10%). Such negative or unremarkable features, whilst contrasting with ‘ritualistic’, ‘Celtic’, or ‘gastronomic’ events, fail to delineate a clear format for ‘social’ Burns Suppers. Considering their local, voluntary, or



community-based nature, however, it might be suggested that ‘social’ hosts are defined not by the quantity of speeches, or the aspect of dishes, but, more importantly, by the qualitative, informal company of old acquaintances, neighbours, or kindred folk present around the table.

Indeed, there is no way for the quantitative analyst to capture the nature of the social joys that, on Burns Night 2020, bound diners from Minginish Community Hall on the Isle of Skye to Woodburne Hospice on the Isle of Man, Bridgnorth Rugby Club near Birmingham, Lefroy-Belle’s Ewart Legion in Ontario, the St Columba’s Church in Budapest, and Taradale’s Social Club in New Zealand. All these featured customary toasts and a straightforward meal; yet beyond these, the night’s quality would have relied mostly on the participants’ company and conversation. Whether these involved discussions about Burns, Scotland, Scottish food, metaphysics, or local gossip is an unknown mystery, which only an observant anthropologist—daring or reckless enough to complete the present study with qualitative pith—could pierce.

That said, a final set of figures and ratios is worth mention. ‘Social’ Burns Suppers remain a mostly monocultural phenomenon, with 333 of them held in Scotland (56% vs 31% for the rest of the database), 122 (21%) in the rest of Britain, and only a handful outside the Anglosphere (6% vs 18%). Yet there are clear differences between Scottish and non-Scottish events—particularly within the United Kingdom. On average, ‘social’ Burns Suppers held in Scotland incorporate around twice as many toasts, with 65% featuring at least four speeches (vs only 33% of other ‘social’ Burns Suppers). They are also more likely to involve several readings of Burns (46% vs 23.5%), including his longer ‘Tam o’ Shanter’ (11% vs 3%). On the other hand, ‘social’ suppers held elsewhere in Britain are even less likely than overseas events to feature several Burns readings (17% vs 30%), although they seem significantly keener on *Cèilidh* dancing (34% vs 15%). Such a contrast between the ‘ritualistic’ leanings of Scottish socials and the lighter, occasionally ‘Celtic’ touch of overseas and greater British events seems to corroborate broader geographical trends. Whilst the ‘ritualistic’ format is markedly Scottish, ‘Celtic’ and ‘gastronomic’ Burns Suppers are more commonly international—with lighter, more informal, or ‘gastronomic’ Burns Suppers predominant in the rest of Britain.

## Conclusion

Overall, the findings from the Burns Supper map and database reveal the profoundly diverse nature of contemporary Burns celebrations. Whilst rehearsing Burns’s patriotic praises for Scottish haggis and whisky, Burns Suppers are now widespread outside the Anglosphere. From Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America, they grow in rich, multicultural directions.<sup>28</sup> Such diversity is not limited to peripheric areas, however; for it is also apparent in Scotland, Britain, and other English-speaking countries. In contrast with common views of Burns Night—nurtured by both Burns Clubs and their critics—most suppers avoid solemn conventions. Traditionalism was instrumental in shaping the Burns Supper format during the Victorian era.<sup>29</sup> Yet a century and a half later, ‘ritualistic’ Burns celebrations are only the tree hiding the forest.

Certainly, caution is key when drawing conclusion from the present typology. ‘Ritualistic’, ‘Celtic’, ‘gastronomic’, and ‘social’ Burns Suppers are neither watertight nor exhaustive categories. Some hosts are likely to blend approaches, as exemplified by the 152<sup>nd</sup> Annual Birthday Festival Dinner of the Burns Club of London—a very formal event, featuring

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<sup>28</sup> See Brancaz-McCartan, ‘The Twenty-First Century Burns Supper’ for further qualitative analyses of multicultural Burns Suppers.

<sup>29</sup> McGinn, ‘The Traditional Period’, in *Comprehensive History*, pp.77-150.

eight toasts, but including a giant, late night, ‘Celtic’ *Cèilidh*. There are several similar Burns Suppers in the database, all testifying to the limits of categorisation. Furthermore, 13% of all listed events remain unattributed due to their lack of quantitative trope. These include Burns Suppers hosted by schools, cultural venues, embassies, and chambers of commerce. Only a defter approach, attuned to specific geographical, social, or demographic contexts, would do justice to such events. For instance, school Burns Suppers — a mostly Scottish phenomenon (78%)— involve pupils from disparate age groups. As a result, it might be worth distinguishing primary school events involving young children, teachers, and parents in a rather informal, social setting, from the more ritualised Burns Suppers ran by senior pupils in high schools. A more refined approach would also be needed for chambers of commerce and embassies’ Burns Suppers. Defined by their diplomatic mission rather than by any quantifiable, Burns Night trope, these key vehicles of Burns Night overseas merit a closer, qualitative study.

By charting the vast, diverse hinterland of Burns Suppers, whilst emphasising the limits of data analysis, it is hoped this study prompts further investigations. Burns studies still need to peer behind the Burnsian façade of Burns Night. Beyond Burns Clubs and prominent Scottish societies, the more discreet, dancing, gastronomic, social —never mind private or family-based— aspects of Burns Suppers remain largely understudied. There is currently no sociological survey of the Burns movement in Britain, and the reasons behind the recent, international growth of Burns Suppers, outside the Anglosphere, are yet to receive detailed attention.<sup>30</sup> In other words, the Burns Supper provides a broad, fast-developing area of study, surveying a unique phenomenon in the history of world literature. The present database and typology presented an initial blueprint for anyone willing to venture further.

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<sup>30</sup> Jo Dougal, ‘In his Name’, and Lauren Brancaz-McCartan, ‘The Twenty-First Century Burns Supper’ are encouraging developments in this direction.