

## Lodge

By William Stewart Watson



### The Inauguration of Robert Burns as Poet Laureate of the Lodge

Robert Burns became a Freemason in 1781 and soon rose to become depute master of St James Lodge in Tarbolton. The subject here is the poet's supposed inauguration as Poet Laureate in the Canongate Kilwinning Lodge No 2, in Edinburgh in 1787. It was painted nearly sixty years later, using prints and family pictures to produce accurate portraits of those present. Although the artist undoubtedly believed in Burns' inauguration, it is unlikely that this event ever took place. Instead, the honor could have been conferred upon Burns posthumously. The Canongate Lodge, also known as St John's Chapel, is the oldest purpose-built Masonic meeting room in the world, dating from 1736. The organ in the background is still played at Lodge meetings.