

NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND

MEDIA RELEASE

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Over half of Scots don't know about the Declaration of Arbroath... but they want to!

- **New research by the National Trust for Scotland published on 700th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration**
 - **Scots keen to know more about the history of the country**

New research commissioned by conservation charity the National Trust for Scotland shows that more than half of Scots have never heard of the Declaration of Arbroath. Published today (Monday 6 April) on the 700th anniversary of signing of the document, the research shows that 51% of Scots had not heard of the Declaration.

When told about the Declaration, 72% of people agreed that it was important or very important for Scotland's development as a nation. The research also showed there was a vast appetite for Scottish history with 77% of people wanting to know more.

The Declaration of Arbroath was a letter from Scotland's leading political leaders to Pope John XXII, arguing for the recognition of Scotland as an independent nation in the context of Scotland's ongoing struggles with the English state. It is often remembered for its stirring words:

"For as long as a hundred of us remain alive, we will never on any conditions be subjected to the lordship of the English. For we fight not for glory, nor riches, nor honours, but for freedom alone, which no good man gives up but with his life."

1,000 people were polled by the Trust and 48.7% of people had heard of the Declaration and knew at least something about it. Men were more likely to claim some level of knowledge of the Declaration, with 14.6% of men reporting knowing a lot about it, compared to 8.3% of women.

Older people were more aware of the Declaration, with double the amount of over 65s knowing about it (15%) compared to the 16-24 age group (7.8%). Only 10.5% of the older group hadn't heard of it, compared to 43.1% of 16-24 year-olds.

Curiously, people from the South of Scotland knew more about the Declaration than the North East, where the Declaration originated (56.6% in the South, compared with 51.7% in the North East - including Arbroath). Highlands and Islands had 46.6% awareness, Lothian 49.3%, West Scotland 52.8%, Central Scotland 46.9%, mid Scotland and Fife 43% and Glasgow 42.7%.

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, people who voted SNP in the 2019 General Election were most likely to have heard of the Declaration (58%), compared with 51.3% of Labour voters, 49.7% of Conservative voters and 49% of Liberal Democrat voters.

Those who voted 'Remain' in the 2016 Brexit Referendum were most likely to consider the Declaration very important (37% compared to 28% for those who voted 'Leave'), as were those who voted 'Yes' in the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum (45% compared to 23% who voted 'No').

The Trust also wanted to know if people would like to know more about Scottish history and the vast majority (77%) said that they would. Overall, the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314 was considered the most important event in Scotland's history, chosen by 26% of those who responded. The second placed event was the Act of Union in 1707.

Diarmid Hearn, Head of Public Policy at the National Trust for Scotland said: "The signing of the Declaration of Arbroath is an incredibly important document in the birth of Scotland as a nation. The survey we commissioned shows that while it may not necessarily be the first historical date that comes to mind, when people hear more about it, they recognise its significance.

"Our research also showed us that when people learn about and experience Scotland's heritage, they are more likely to value it and want to conserve it for the future. We also found that almost 70% of people prefer to learn about history by visiting historic sites. It shows that there is a huge appetite for people in Scotland - and from further afield - to learn more about Scotland's history, and the Trust is here to help them do that."

To mark the 700th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Arbroath, the Trust is investing in the House of Dun, which encompasses the Montrose Basin Nature Reserve, to create a new experience for visitors to learn about the birth of Scotland and the history of Angus. The stables and courtyard area will be redeveloped, a new Angus Folk Museum will be established to tell the story of the people of Angus, its history and its landscape. There will also be a special exhibition on the Declaration of Arbroath.

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Issued on behalf of National Trust for Scotland by Frame PR.

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The National Trust for Scotland is the charity that celebrates and protects Scotland's heritage. It relies on the support of its members and donors to carry out its important work of caring for the natural and built heritage of Scotland for everyone to enjoy.

From coastlines to castles, art to architecture, wildlife to wildernesses, the National Trust for Scotland exists to protect the national and natural treasures we all love. To plan your visit today, enter your postcode at www.nts.org.uk.