



**NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **WWE star salutes the legend of Robert Burns as he returns home to birthplace museum**

**Wrestler Drew McIntyre pays special visit to the birthplace of Scotland's Bard**

WWE superstar and local hero, Drew McIntyre, enjoyed a special homecoming – paying a visit to Robert Burns Birthplace Museum ahead of Burns' Night.

The 34-year-old is currently one of the biggest stars in world wrestling and now lives in the United States, but was born and brought up in Prestwick, just a short journey from the Alloway cottage and museum which is dedicated to Scotland's national bard.

This was a rare opportunity for Drew to return home to Scotland, with the recent World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) tour crisscrossing Europe and including a three-night run in Dubai.

The visit features in a new video for the National Trust for Scotland, the conservation charity, who care for and protect the cottage where Burns was born, the award-winning museum which is situated nearby and surrounding statues and landmarks.

Drew's wrestling persona draws on his heritage and he has been known to fly the Saltire at matches. During the visit he spoke about his love for Scotland and Burns' works.

"I am excited to be back home, especially being here at Burns Cottage," said Drew. "This is the kind of place we used to visit when I was growing up, but I never really appreciated it. When you go to America, you are longing to come back home and this is exciting for me."

The 262-year-old cottage and modern museum has become a place of pilgrimage for Scottish expatriates and fans of the Bard's work from all over the world. Research, published on January 10 by Glasgow University and launched at the cottage, revealed that Burns is worth £203million annually to the Scottish economy.

Robert Burns Birthplace Museum is second only to William Shakespeare among UK writers' museums, in terms of visitor numbers.

Following a successful fundraising campaign, the cottage closed for vital repairs during winter but re-opened Sunday January 18 and will remain open to visitors until February 3.



Drew heard of the challenges involved in preserving and protecting Burns' legacy and called on all Scots to help support it.

"Places like this need to be preserved for future generations," said Drew. "The work that the National Trust for Scotland is carrying out here is vital.

"I love being Scottish. I am so proud to be from here and every time I get the opportunity to come here, all I want to do is learn more and take in our history. Thanks to the National Trust for Scotland people from around the world get the opportunity to come here to visit places like Burns Cottage and Burns Museum.

"It's so important that everyone in Scotland knows how important our heritage is and just how much the rest of the world admires our history. If you're from Scotland you should be damn proud to be Scottish, I know I am and I appreciate what the National Trust for Scotland are doing. So, let's keep Scotland's history alive."

National Trust for Scotland volunteers and staff showed Drew around the property on the day, bringing Burns' stories to life and, as they explained, Drew's support is greatly appreciated and could help introduce Burns to a new audience.

Caroline Smith, Operations Manager at the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum said: "We love to welcome all visitors to Robert Burns Birthplace Museum but to have Drew visit added a bit of extra excitement.

"It was really interesting to meet Drew, who obviously has a strong local connection and has this genuine affection not only for Robert Burns but for his works.

"The fact he now lives in the United States means this fondness for Scotland, Burns and Scottish culture has grown. When you live here in Scotland, we sometimes take this for granted.

"It was a pleasure for the staff to meet him," Caroline added. "He was very friendly and took the time to speak to everyone. And we did our best to keep him going on food! He started off with a full breakfast and had haggis, neeps and tatties for his mid-morning snack!"

Robert Burns Birthplace Museum will also host a series of special events to mark the Bard's birthday.

On the day itself (Saturday January 25) there is a free Burns Gala Day for visitors of all ages. A celebration of the life and legacy of Burns, it will feature traditional and contemporary live performances, food and drink tastings and fun and games for families and little ones.



In the evening from 7pm, the museum transforms for the first ever Blazing Burns Night Spectacular – a ceilidh and choreographed fire show which is also suitable for all ages.

And on Sunday January 26, the museum is hosting a Big Burns Brunch, with 11am or 1pm sessions.

You can watch Drew's full video and download for use on your platform and social media channels here:

Version with subtitles: <https://we.tl/t-Y5HNdGrNSm>

Version without subtitles: <https://we.tl/t-MChgMwaAMr>

You can find out more about Robert Burns Birthplace Museum and book your place at the events here: <https://www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/robert-burns-birthplace-museum>

**ENDS**

**Issued on behalf of National Trust for Scotland by Frame PR. For media enquiries contact:** Gregor Kyle on 07415 537087, [gregor.kyle@framecreates.co.uk](mailto:gregor.kyle@framecreates.co.uk) or Rory Weller, 0141 559 5840, [rory.weller@framecreates.co.uk](mailto:rory.weller@framecreates.co.uk)

## **ABOUT THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND**

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.

Every day, the hundreds of thousands of members, donors, volunteers and staff at the charity help to protect Scotland's natural and national treasures for us all to enjoy. From coastlines to castles, art to architecture, wildlife to wildernesses, we do what we do... for the *love* of Scotland. Join us at [www.nts.org.uk/love](http://www.nts.org.uk/love)

We protect:

- 8 National Nature Reserves,
- 38 gardens and designed landscapes,
- 46 majestic Munros,
- 400 islands and islets,
- 26 castles and great houses,
- 300,000 precious artefacts,
- 76,000 hectares of countryside.

In the next five years, we're aiming to:



- Spend £57 million improving the visitor experience and condition of heritage in our care
- Increase annual visitor numbers to more than 5 million
- Grow membership to more than 490,000
- Increase donations to more than £10 million, and
- Create active learning experiences for more than 100,000 people of all ages and backgrounds every year.

From coastlines to castles, art to architecture, wildlife to wilderness, we encourage people to connect with the things that make Scotland unique while protecting them for future generations.