

## **NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND MEDIA RELEASE**

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

**21 July, 2019**

### **Burns Monument reopens after restoration**

Burns Monument in Alloway was rededicated with a ceremony today (Sunday 21 July) on the anniversary of the poet's death, marking the completion of a major programme of restoration and repair by conservation charity The National Trust for Scotland. The monument reopens to the public tomorrow (Monday 22 July).

The 223rd anniversary of Burns' death was marked with a procession from Burns Cottage to the newly restored monument, which was first unveiled in 1823.

Designed by Edinburgh architect Thomas Hamilton Junior, the 70-foot high Grecian-style temple was commissioned by the Burns Monument Trust, a group of individuals in Alloway who wanted to build a suitable memorial to the life and works of Robert Burns in his birthplace village.

Burns lovers around the world contributed to the fund to build the original monument. This international recognition for Burns and his work has been mirrored today with the restoration project supported by many individual donors and organisations in Scotland and beyond, including The National Trust for Scotland Foundation USA.

Work over the last year on the monument has included stone restoration, leadwork, drainage repairs, a new cupula and general decoration work. Expert conservators spent 14,000 hours working on the restoration.

Particular attention was given to the mortar joints, where historically accurate grouting was used to make the structure watertight and protect it for generations to come. Approximately 9,000 litres of the grout went in to filling the voids in the monument involving a specialist mortar consultant who worked with the Trust's own stonemasonry team at nearby Culzean using bespoke equipment developed for the project.

Specialist monitoring equipment has been installed, with humidity and temperature sensors to assess air quality and building performance. These will allow the Trust to monitor the moisture within the building over the next few years.

Caroline Smith, Operations Manager at the Robert Burns Birthplace said: "It was only 20 or so years after Burns' death that the Burns Monument Trust came together in Alloway to pay

tribute to his genius with this impressive monument in the place of his birth. It's incredible, more than 200 years later, to see this wonderful structure restored and looking at its best once again. Like the original monument, support for this project has come from around the world and has been vital in enabling us to protect this important part of Scotland's heritage."

The monument is part of the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum in Alloway which also includes the humble cottage where the bard was born and Auld Kirk where Tam o'Shanter had an eventful Halloween, and a new purpose-built museum which is home to the world's foremost Burns' collection. The Robert Burns Birthplace Museum is a cultural hub in Ayrshire, bringing the best in art, music and literature to the public. Generously supported by the Scottish Government and the Heritage Lottery Fund, it commemorates the life and works of Robert Burns.

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