

NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND MEDIA RELEASE

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2019's Burns weekend proves to be really appealing

Conservation charity the National Trust for Scotland has hailed its most successful weekend celebration yet of the birth of Robert Burns.

Caroline Smith, Operations Manager at the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum in Alloway, revealed that it welcomed 1,838 visitors on Saturday, 26 January and a further 1,497 on the following day.

450 helpings of haggis, neaps and tatties were also served at the unique Burns Supper drive thru set up to mark the bard's birthday.

Caroline said:

"It was a fabulously fun weekend that followed on from the formal suppers of Burns Night.

"The volunteers and staff at the museum were delighted to see so many people of all ages coming to find out more about Burns and enjoying themselves immensely in the process. As we know, he was a man of who was very fond of entertainment, and I think he would have approved and been amused by the sight of so many people coming together so joyfully."

The weekend's events took place against the backdrop of a major fundraising appeal organised by the Trust to enable vital conservation work to be carried out on the cottage where Robert Burns was born on 25 January 1759.

The appeal received a boost when Scots film star Jack Lowden, who has appeared in big budget productions like *Dunkirk*, *Calibre* and *Mary Queen of Scots*, tweeted his support:

"Folks, Robert's Burns' hoose needs saving!! Please gee whit ye can & help preserve the legacy of wur maist loved son!!"

Caroline Smith added:

“It was great to receive Jack’s support added to the many positive comments and contributions that have been made so far – we’re delighted to have already received generous donations, however we still need the public’s help to get to our target of £100,000.

“The vast majority of people have been very supportive and helpful but I know a few have questioned why we need to launch an appeal and whether we are properly taking care of the cottage.

“The fact is the National Trust for Scotland is a charity and conservation is such an expensive business that even all the membership fees and donations we receive, as generous as they are, are not enough.

“The investment that created the Robert Burns Museum in 2010 came from a number of sources including the Scottish Government and the Heritage Lottery Fund and covered the initial capital costs. The ongoing running costs and conservation are wholly funded by our charity.

“We’ve been investing a lot in the museum lately, including the soon to be completed restoration of the Burns Monument. In the case of Burns Cottage, we have carried out ongoing maintenance but have decided to prioritise restoration work to deal with the thatch and limewash due to more rapid than expected deterioration. This in turn is because the weather has been much more harsh and extreme than normal over the past two years.

“As is normal when a decision is made to carry out a major project using specialised skills and techniques like this we fundraise. As a charity, that’s what we do and we are so grateful for the generous support we’ve received and hope that more people can give a helping hand by donating to the appeal.”

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National Trust for Scotland Press Office. Contact Jim Whyteside on 0131 458 0241.

Editor’s Notes:



