



12 June 2023

APPLE OF HIS EYE – COMMONWEALTH GAMES ARTIST CREATES GARDEN SCULPTURE FOR NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND

- **Sculptor Robert Coia created apple sculpture for National Trust for Scotland’s Brodick Castle on the Isle of Arran**
- **New sculpture celebrates castle’s walled garden past when it functioned as a kitchen garden**
- **Sculpture created using timber from fallen oak tree within the castle grounds**

A new sculpture created by Glasgow’s Commonwealth Games sculptor Robert Coia has been installed in the walled garden at the National Trust for Scotland’s Brodick Castle on the Isle of Arran.

The apple sculpture, created using timber from a fallen oak tree from within the castle grounds, takes pride of place in the walled garden to celebrate its former function as a kitchen garden and tree nursery between 1710 – 1860, before it was turned into a formal pleasure garden in the nineteenth century.

The conservation charity commissioned the sculpture to create a focal point within the lawned area of the walled garden to encourage visitors to explore the garden in a different way, to admire the planting and sundial centrepiece from further angles and take in the stunning view over Brodick Bay from the oldest parts of the garden.

Sculptor Robert Coia, who served his apprenticeship with Arran-based sculptor Marvin Elliot over 30 years ago and created several large-scale sculptures including that of the official mascot Clyde for Glasgow’s Commonwealth Games in 2014, was commissioned to design and create the apple sculpture, which took around 9 weeks to complete. Timber was transported from the grounds of the castle to Robert’s studio in High Corrie on the Isle of Arran, where he created the impressive wood carving before it was recently installed at Brodick in May 2023.

Tim Keyworth, National Trust for Scotland Gardens and Designed Landscape Manager, Ayrshire and Arran, said: “We’re delighted with the new apple sculpture Robert has created, it looks fantastic and the team at Brodick are excited to welcome visitors to the walled gardens to see the stunning sculpture in place. The new addition complements the recent planting of apple trees, grown to a framework that edge the lawns and entice visitors to explore the gardens further.

“Alongside the new apple sculpture, we have also commissioned Robert to create a new installation inspired by peaches that will further enhance the walled garden and is expected later in the year. It’s thanks to the generous support of our members and donors that we’re able to create areas of interest in our gardens and continue to care for and protect our special places, such as Brodick. Creating new outdoor art installations like this supports our objectives to provide inspiring heritage visitor experiences as outlined in our 10-year strategy, launched in 2022, to provide access to nature, beauty and heritage for everyone.”

Visitors to Brodick can enjoy the new apple sculpture within the walled gardens of the castle’s estate alongside other activities including the Silver Garden Trail and Plant Hunters’ Walk. Younger visitors can explore the castle’s grounds and woodlands on the new Fairies and Legends Trail or go wild in the Isle Be Wild adventure playground.

Sculptor Robert Coia said: “I’m really pleased to see the finished sculpture find its home in the walled garden at Brodick Castle. I couldn’t resist the opportunity to work with the timber from the fallen oak as it provided an excellent material to work with. The curved nature of the apples was a challenge, but I’m delighted with the outcome and the opportunity for it to be enjoyed by visitors long into the future.”

Brodick Castle, Garden and Country Park, the only island country park in the UK, is teeming with history with the main castle building constructed in 1844, however, the ancient seat of the Dukes of Hamilton is thought to date back centuries. Its strategic position overlooking the Firth of Clyde made it a formidable fortress in its time, but now, Brodick offers a more serene experience for those wishing to escape the hustle and bustle of the mainland.

Art installations such as the apple sculptures at Brodick Castle, contribute to the Trust’s strategy to deliver Nature, Beauty & Heritage for Everyone. The 10-year strategy, unveiled in 2022, refocuses its vision of caring for, sharing, and conserving Scotland’s heritage. Read more about the strategy at: <https://www.nts.org.uk/our-work/our-strategy>

ENDS

Editor’s Notes:

About the National Trust for Scotland

Established in 1931, the National Trust for Scotland is Scotland’s largest conservation charity and cares for, shares and speaks up for Scotland’s magnificent heritage.

Over the last 90 years the Trust has pioneered public access to and shared ownership of some of the most magnificent buildings, collections and landscapes in Scotland. It cares for more than 100 sites, from ancient houses to battlefields, castles, mills, gardens, coastlines, islands, mountain ranges and the plants and animals which depend upon them.

In March 2022 the National Trust for Scotland launched *Nature, Beauty & Heritage for Everyone*, its ten-year strategy which sets out the ambitions of the charity over the coming decade. From speaking up for Scotland's heritage which doesn't have a voice, to improving the lives and wellbeing of people across the country, and responding to the climate and biodiversity crisis, the Trust will build on its work in recent years to grow its impact and conserve and restore more of Scotland's heritage, as it moves towards its centenary in 2031.

Scotland's largest membership organisation, the National Trust for Scotland relies on the support of its members and donors to carry out its important work.

For more information on the National Trust for Scotland visit www.nts.org.uk.

The National Trust for Scotland is a charity registered in Scotland, Charity Number SC 007410.