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CRATHES CASTLE GARDENERS REINVENT ITS ROSE GARDEN FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

- **National Trust for Scotland completes 'renaissance' of centuries-old rose garden at Crathes Castle, Aberdeenshire - thanks to generous support from donors**
- **Design elements span nearly five millennia, and provide model for rejuvenating traditional Victorian gardens**
- **Conservation charity - the largest garden owner in Scotland - invites supporters and public to celebrate opening on 23 July**

National Trust for Scotland gardeners in Aberdeenshire are celebrating the completion of a new Rose Garden at Crathes Castle, after over a decade of planning, reconstruction work and planting. The redesigned garden, which looks both backwards and forwards in time for design inspiration, opens to the conservation charity's supporters and the public from 23 July.

In reinventing the centuries-old Rose Garden at Crathes, the conservation charity's gardens team looked across five millennia for inspiration, including the area's Neolithic past, the history of Crathes Castle and the area, the Arts & Crafts movement, and 21st century sustainability challenges. Visitors are describing it as a 'renaissance' of the Rose Garden, one of eight 'rooms' in the castle's internationally known walled garden. It also provides a model for how to update the traditional format of the Victorian rose garden to feel more engaging and relevant for current generations.

James Hannaford, the National Trust for Scotland's Head Gardener at Crathes Castle, explained: "While the Rose Garden was rejuvenated several times in the 20th century, the designs and plantings still looked back to a traditional, formal Victorian design, a format that was looking tired by the 2010s. So, while the earlier designs had been classics of their time, the team at Crathes set themselves the challenge to reimagine the design, bringing it alive for new generations while also referencing its history and retaining elements like the famous yew hedges which date back to 1702 or earlier.

"Following several years of design and planning by our charity's expert gardeners and other specialists, and then a year of reconstruction, ground preparation and planting, the garden is now in full and glorious bloom for the first time this summer. We hope that people of all ages will love this garden, enjoy it, help us care for it and share it."

Throughout the new garden are elements from the history of Crathes Castle, which dates back to the sixteenth century and was the home of the Burnett family for some 350 years. The layout of the eight flower beds replicates a stylised Burnett rose, the use of lavender in the outer borders references the historical lavender industry around Banchory, and materials used in the construction, such as Caithness stone, are locally sourced. The centrepiece of the garden is a carved granite reproduction of a Neolithic stone ball, or petrosphere. Predominantly found in the North East of Scotland and dating back to over 4500 years ago, these balls are thought to have been status or ceremonial items.

The more 21st century elements in the design include wildlife-friendly planting, the choice of new plant varieties with good drought, pest and disease resistance, and the use of recycled materials – in support of the Trust's new 10-year gardens strategy, launched earlier this year. The strategy sets out the conservation charity's aims to conserve and celebrate the heritage of the 38 gardens it owns, and the 100,000 garden plants it looks after within them; to make its gardens more resilient and environmentally friendly; to increase and widen their appeal; and to expand the provision of specialist gardening skills, training and learning.

Chris Wardle, the National Trust for Scotland's Gardens & Designed Landscapes Manager for the North East, added: "Our new National Trust for Scotland gardens strategy, with its vision of Connecting People, Plants and Places, recognises that our beautiful gardens and designed landscapes are very much about people: the people who created them, work and volunteer in them, and experience them. The new Rose Garden at Crathes encapsulates that – it results from the creativity, planning, expertise and generosity of a wide cast of people who love this place, and who understand the power of gardens, designed landscapes and plants to inspire and create wellbeing. It's taken many years of ideas and planning – and huge generosity from donors - to bring this garden to fruition, and all of us involved are very proud to finally share it with our supporters and the public."

The work to reinvent the Crathes rose garden was made possible by the late Professor Ian Young and his wife Sylvia who enjoyed a long association with Aberdeenshire and its gardens, and funded many National Trust for Scotland projects across the North East. These included the new parterre garden at Pitmedden, opened in 2022, and the garden entrance at Crathes, as well as projects at Craigievar Castle and Drum Castle.

The Rose Garden is the third and final major project to be completed from the Youngs' donation to the conservation charity, and represents the largest-ever single investment in the Crathes heritage garden in its history. Ian and Sylvia, who shared a love of gardens and roses in particular, were involved in the project from its earliest stages, encouraging the Trust to go ahead with the project, contributing ideas to the design process, and fully funding the project. Members of the Young family will be present at the opening of the garden in July.

Philip Long OBE, Chief Executive of the National Trust for Scotland, welcomed the presence of the Young family at the opening of the new Rose Garden: “The Young family’s generosity to the National Trust for Scotland has created and conserved some magnificent gardens across the North East, and provided powerful support to our charity’s vision to provide access and enjoyment for everyone. Nature, gardens and designed landscapes have never been more important as places where people can relax, learn, meet and create memories, and we are grateful for everyone who makes it possible – through their donations, membership, volunteering or visits - for the Trust to conserve and share our own gardens and landscapes. Without them, we simply could not deliver our work to protect and share Scotland’s wonderful nature, beauty and heritage.”

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Notes to editors

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.

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