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**NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND MEDIA RELEASE**  
**21 JUNE 2021**

## **The Bark of Ayrshire immortalised in bronze**

Canine celebrities Olive & Mabel, joined their owner Andrew Cotter at the Poet's Path in Alloway this week to meet another doggie duo, The Twa Dogs; a new sculpture at the National Trust for Scotland's Robert Burns Birthplace.

Olive & Mabel's sporting contests, with commentary by Troon-born broadcaster Andrew, went viral in 2020. As well as racking up nearly 90 million views on social media, they recently appeared on the Bafta TV Awards and are even the subject of a book.

They met life-size bronze sculptures of Luath and Caesar, dogs from Burns' The Twa Dogs poem. Created by artist Sally Matthews, the work was commissioned by the Trustees of The National Trust for Scotland Foundation USA to honour their former chair, Helen E.R. Sayles.

Burns' The Twa Dogs is the opening poem in Burns' first published collection, the 1786 Kilmarnock Edition. Luath was the name of Burns' own collie and it is said that Burns met his future wife Jean Armour after she tripped over Luath at a wedding.

A social satire on wealth, poverty and class, the poem is largely told from the viewpoint of the dogs, with Burns using the conversation between Luath and Caesar to pointedly examine society's inequalities.

The Twa Dogs sculpture now takes its place on Poet's Path which connects Burns Cottage with the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum, owned and run by conservation charity, the National Trust for Scotland that over 90 years has saved, maintained and shared many of the country's most loved places.

The work sits alongside scenes from Tam o' Shanter by Timorous Beasties, Kenny Hunter's not-so 'wee mouse' made from cast iron and Jake Harvey's larger-than-life granite haggis.

Kirstin Bridier from The National Trust for Scotland Foundation USA said: "The sculpture was commissioned to thank Helen E.R. Sayles for her six years as chair. Helen hails from Ayrshire and has supported many projects at the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum, so we thought the property was a perfect place to commemorate her tremendous leadership of the American foundation."

Ali MacLeod, Head of Fundraising at the National Trust for Scotland said: "Helen, is a wonderful friend and supporter of both the NTS Foundation USA and our charity here in

Scotland. Helen's commitment to Scotland's heritage, protecting the places we love for future generations, is inspiring and deeply valued."

[www.nts.org.uk](http://www.nts.org.uk)

[www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/robert-burns-birthplace-museum](http://www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/robert-burns-birthplace-museum)

[www.ntsusa.org/twa-dogs/](http://www.ntsusa.org/twa-dogs/)

<https://www.oliveandmabelbook.com/olive-and-mabel.html>

– ENDS –

Free use attached images show broadcaster Andrew Cotter with his dogs Olive & Mabel, and NTS' Stacie Taylor (Visitor Services Assistant).

More images are available on request.

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#### NOTES TO EDITORS

The National Trust for Scotland

The National Trust for Scotland is the conservation charity that over 90 years has saved, maintained and shared many of the country's most loved places, rich with history, heritage, nature and culture. The charity celebrates Scotland's heritage and with more than 100 places in its care, there's a place for everyone to love.

The National Trust for Scotland relies on the support of its members and donors to carry out its important work of caring for the natural and built heritage that people from Scotland and across the world all love, ensuring its future for everyone to enjoy.

Support the National Trust for Scotland and help them protect the places we all love. Become a member at [www.nts.org.uk](http://www.nts.org.uk).

We would be grateful if, when referring to the National Trust for Scotland that our name is not shortened to 'the National Trust'. We are an independent organisation, separate from the National Trust. The National Trust for Scotland is commonly shortened to NTS or 'the Trust'.

