

NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND MEDIA RELEASE
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Thousands take a cup o' kindness in National Trust for Scotland's Burns Big Night In

Viewers from all around the world tuned in to Burns Cottage on Saturday as conservation charity The National Trust for Scotland hosted its first ever virtual Burns night. The Alloway cottage is owned and managed by the Trust and is the place where Burns was born over 260 years ago. It was also the site of the first Burns Supper in 1801 making 2021 the 220th anniversary of the event which is now celebrated around the world by around nine million people.

Over 2,600 tickets were sold for the Burns Big Night In, hosted by DJ and presenter Edith Bowman. Broadcast live from Burns Cottage, the event featured a mix of music, song and poetry as well as conversation about his life, work and legacy.

Janey Godley gave her take on the Bard, Alistair McCulloch played the Gregg Violin, an instrument played by Burns himself and NTS Learning Manager Chris Waddell showed viewers an original manuscript of Auld Lang Syne in Burns' own hand. Performances also came from Kevin Williamson, Talisk, Iona Lee and Jenn Butterworth & Ross Ainslie.

While the majority of virtual attendees were in the UK, Burns fans logged in from around the world with viewers in the USA, Canada, Australia, Denmark, Singapore, Norway, Spain, Germany, South Africa, Belgium, Ireland, Switzerland, Israel, Cyprus, Sweden, Finland, Hong Kong, Bahrain and Austria.

Messages of support came throughout the night including Culture Secretary Fiona Hyslop Tweeting saying how much she enjoyed the event saying: "Well done National Trust for Scotland, a great contemporary but heritage and culture rich celebration of the works of genius of Robert Burns, as an Alloway lass I'm very proud."

One viewer even took to verse to praise the night saying:
"Covid came to us all last year,
It changed our lives and gave us fear!
We thank Edith and the National Trust,
For celebrating Rabbie, cos thats a must!"

Mark Bishop, Director of Customer & Cause at the National Trust for Scotland said: "The Burns Big Night In wasn't just the largest virtual event we've ever done but the biggest Burns night we've staged. To have so many people around the world share our passion for

Burns was phenomenal and it shows that in these extraordinary times the desire to come together and celebrate the things we love about Scotland is stronger than ever. The money raised from the event will continue the work we do such as the rethatching of Burns Cottage and repairing and restoring Burns Monument. And for that, as Burns might say, we're thankit."

ENDS

Issued on behalf of National Trust for Scotland by Frame PR.

Images attached show; Edith Bowman presenting the event live from Burns Cottage, Alistair McCulloch playing the Gregg Violin (an instrument that Burns played at his dance classes) and Kevin Williamson reciting Tam O'Shanter. All should be credited 'National Trust for Scotland'.

For more information, images and interviews, contact Rory Weller on 07841 720006 / rory.weller@framecreates.co.uk

Editor's Notes:

The National Trust for Scotland is the charity that celebrates and protects Scotland's heritage. It relies on the support of its members and donors to carry out its important work of caring for the natural and built heritage of Scotland for everyone to enjoy.

From coastlines to castles, art to architecture, wildlife to wildernesses, the National Trust for Scotland exists to protect the national and natural treasures we all love. To plan your visit today, enter your postcode at 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'.