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HE'S A GREAT SCOT: TOM CONTI SHARES HIS OWN LOVE OF SCOTLAND IN NEW PODCAST EPISODE FROM THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND

- **Paisley-born actor, Tom Conti, reminisces on his acting career and playing one of science's most iconic figures in Christopher Nolan's international hit, *Oppenheimer***
- **Shares his own love for Scotland on the latest episode of *Love Scotland* – the conservation charity's popular podcast hosted by Jackie Bird**

Scottish writer, actor and performer, Tom Conti, is the subject of the latest episode of the National Trust for Scotland's podcast series, *Love Scotland*, hosted by Trust President and former broadcast anchor Jackie Bird, which is now available to listen to on all major platforms.

After winning a Tony award for his role in *Whose life is it anyway?*, Tom found himself to be the talk of the town, telling Jackie "New York is such an amazing place, as soon as someone is successful at something it seems to get broadcasted telepathically and everyone immediately knows you."

Touching on how vital reviews are for an actor's career, Tom reflects on the high emotions experienced in his early career, gathering with fellow performers in a nearby cafe waiting for someone to rush back with a copy of *The Times*. If you were mentioned by reviewers, you were deemed a success and if not, then the public would come to see you as a flop. Tom talks of experiencing both scenarios, notably with a directorial role which didn't make the cut for *The Times*: "It's suddenly as if everyone avoids you as if you have an infectious disease and they're afraid to be close to you in case they catch your failure".

Tom's recording with Jackie is the latest in the highly successful podcast series that she hosts and produces for the conservation charity. It follows the Trust's USA Foundation, which raises money to support preservation of heritage in Scotland, recognising Tom with its Great Scot Award at a glamorous event in New York in April, celebrating his lifetime of work as a prominent Scottish actor, director and novelist.

Tom was deemed the perfect recipient of the award, which hails Scots, or people closely associated with Scotland, who have made a significant contribution to their respective industries, with past recipients including Judy Murray, Alexander McCall Smith and Diana Gabaldon.

Throughout the episode Tom, who is originally from Paisley, reflects on his impressive career; discussing the highs and lows of acting, his love for Scotland and some of the less desirable consequences of a career in the arts – like growing a moustache.

Tom's most recent role was in Christopher Nolan's *Oppenheimer*, playing the famed physicist Albert Einstein. It was a standout performance that was well received with reviewers. When Tom was first told that Nolan would be interested in having him play one of science's greatest minds he immediately said yes but, despite jumping at the opportunity, he hated growing his moustache for the role. Nevertheless, committed to the part and to cutting down on hair and make-up preparation time, Tom tells Jackie of how he would roam the streets during filming in his Einstein costume and, unsurprisingly, caught a few odd glances from passers-by.

With a career that could easily inspire multiple podcast episodes, Tom also reflects on his smaller, cameo roles, like a famous episode of *Friends*, noting that it was some of the most fun he's had acting and it resulted in the most interest and excitement that his daughter ever expressed for one of his roles.

Tom also recalled a role closely connected to the National Trust for Scotland, when he played Charles Rennie Mackintosh – another moustachioed role - in a drama documentary in the late 1980s.

Commenting on the part, Tom said: "Mackintosh was such a huge, wonderful figure and also he wasn't treated very well... all people that come up with something new are going to have trouble."

Having filmed in the National Trust for Scotland's Hill House and the Mackintosh at the Willow, building before its recent refurbishment, Conti still possesses a menu designed by Margaret Mackintosh which was found in the original Willow Tearooms building in Sauchiehall Street.

Jackie Bird, President of the National Trust for Scotland and host of its award-winning podcast Love Scotland, said: "Tom has had a remarkable career and we were honoured to celebrate him with our partners at the National Trust for Scotland USA Foundation, to grant him the Great Scot award. Like many Scots, he's extremely down to earth and not quick to give himself praise but, even from the quick recap of his illustrious career through the episode, it's clear that he is one of our country's best. We hugely enjoyed hearing about the love he has for his home country and sharing stories from his fascinating career."

As previous alumni, Tom was invited to speak at Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Conti's advice for the aspiring actors of this generation was "find something else to do... don't act, acting is not what's needed... being absolutely real and talking is what acting is all about."

The episode concludes season eight of the award-winning podcast, which has included episodes on Scottish monarchs, Robert the Bruce, Mary Queen of Scots and World War II warplane discoveries.

Love Scotland is the National Trust for Scotland's podcast. With new episodes released weekly, the podcast shares spellbinding stories from Scotland's history, highlights some of the amazing places in the Trust's care and welcomes fascinating guests.

Season nine begins on Friday 5 July.

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

Love Scotland can be accessed on Spotify or Apple Podcasts or directly via its website: <https://www.nts.org.uk/stories/for-the-love-of-scotland-podcasts>

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Notes to editors

For more information, imagery or interview requests please contact Muckle Media on nts@mucklemedia.co.uk or call 0131 228 9713.

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.