

Burns celebrations at Edinburgh Castle this weekend



Many are celebrating the work of our national bard with Burns suppers and there will be activities for all the family up on Castle Rock this weekend.

Stirling and Edinburgh Castles will be celebrating all things Robert Burns this weekend with a programme of events exploring the life and works of one of Scotland's most famous sons. To mark Burns' Night activities for all ages are on offer.

Burns visited Stirling Castle in 1787 and was so affected by the history of the place that when he returned to his lodgings he etched the now-famous Stirling Lines into a window pane in his room with a diamond-tipped pen. The lines lament the demise of the Stewart Dynasty and the ruinous state of the castle at the time, which is said to have aroused Burns's Jacobitism.

At Stirling Castle, a series of special tours will take the route of a normal castle tour but will include recitals of Burns' poetry and prose. For the little ones, Burns for Bairns is a series of fun tours of the castle especially for children, designed to teach them more about the bard.

Visitors of all ages can try their hand at composing a few lines about their visit to Stirling Castle in the manner of Burns in a pop-up Poet's Corner. Youngsters will even have the chance to enter their work into a competition to win a voucher for the gift shop.

Furthermore, in the Great Hall the castle's chef will teach visitors more about the history of the Burns' Supper and

Deanston Distillery will be hosting whisky tastings in the gift shop.

At Edinburgh Castle, Burns for Beginners is a series of short performances by Alistair Strachan, offering visitors a light-hearted introduction to Burns and his works.

Visitors will have the chance to read a series of Scots poems at various locations around the castle and children can take part in the Edinburgh Castle quiz in Scots. There will also be a tempting Burns-themed menu in the Redcoat Café, and the Whisky & Finest Foods gift shop will be hosting a whisky tasting on Sunday.

All events at both castles are included in the cost of admission. They form part of the Year of Homecoming 2014's programme of events celebrating Scotland's food and drink, active pursuits, cultural heritage, nature and ancestral heritage.

Lorna Ewan, Head of Visitor Experience, Content and Learning at Historic Scotland said: "Robert Burns is our best-loved poet so we were keen to celebrate his legacy at two of our biggest sites. Visitors to Stirling and Edinburgh Castles this weekend are in for a special treat, as they get the opportunity to learn more about one of Scotland's most famous sons in a programme of events that will entertain children and adults alike."