

Burns&Beyond will be back next year

Unique Events, organisers of the inaugural Burns&Beyond with Johnnie Walker, today confirmed that over 30,000 visitors enjoyed a packed programme of free and ticketed events over the seven days of the Festival last week. Activities included a series of free family events and installations which were enjoyed by thousands, resulting in a 16% increase in footfall along Rose Street against the same period in 2018.

The centre piece of the Festival was Luke Jerram's stunning installation Museum of the Moon in St Giles' Cathedral. Over 25,000 people visited St Giles' during the week-long event (an increase of 113% from the same period last year) and audiences also enjoyed a sell-out series of special performances in the landmark building.



Museum of the Moon at St Giles Cathedral

Alan Thomson & Penny Dougherty, Directors of Unique Events said "The response to Burns&Beyond has been overwhelming from both our audiences and the artists who helped create such a spectacular programme of events. To welcome over 30,000 locals and visitors to the inaugural festival is a phenomenal achievement and has certainly laid down a marker to make Burns&Beyond in Edinburgh a significant event in Scotland's celebrations for the Bard".

Sarah Phemister, Head of Heritage and Culture at St Giles' Cathedral, said "It has been a pleasure to work with Unique Events on the first ever Burns&Beyond Festival. We were delighted to be able to host Luke Jerram's Moon installation and have enjoyed welcoming audiences from Edinburgh and afar to a variety of exciting and memorable events throughout the week-long programme."

Burns&Beyond with Johnnie Walker offered a programme of events for all ages across the city centre over seven days and was supported by the City of Edinburgh Council, Essential Edinburgh, Scotland's Winter Festivals, Marketing Edinburgh and major event sponsors, Johnnie Walker. Sold-out evening events to complement Museum of the Moon at St Giles' included performances by Rachel Sermanni and Roddy Woomble, and a talk

by the Royal Observatory's Dr William Taylor. A 'not-so-traditional' Burns Supper at Freemason's Hall was fully subscribed, as were the Family Ceilidh and Edinburgh's first Major Minor Music Club event featuring Pictish Trail.

The new Burns&Beyond Culture Trail on Saturday allowed audiences to journey across the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh through eight venues, enjoying everything from a Silent Disco to Whisky Tasting with Johnnie Walker to learn about our national drink and raise a toast to Burns, along with live performances by Aidan O'Rourke, Deacon Blue's Ricky Ross, Kathryn Joseph and a riotous rendition of Burns' Tam O'Shanter performed by Kevin Williamson of Neu! Reekie together with the Kixx Collective.

Councillor Donald Wilson, Culture and Communities Convener, said: "What an impressive turn out for the first year of the new festival commemorating the life and legacy of Scotland's Bard. The impact of Robert Burns on Edinburgh and Scotland cannot be underestimated. The streets he walked and the people he met were of course a great inspiration in his work, and from his statue in Leith to the Burns Monument at Regent Road, the much-loved poet's influence is still felt all over the city and even contributed to the Edinburgh becoming the world's first UNESCO City of Literature. The programme rightly celebrated the considerable achievements of Robert Burns and was enjoyed by those well versed in his works and those discovering him for the first time."

David Cutter, President of Global Supply and Procurement at Diageo, said: "It's been a privilege to celebrate the legacy of Robert Burns across the city this month and raise a glass of Johnnie Walker to The Bard. From whisky tastings to Burns Suppers, we've been proud to partner with Unique Events on this dedicated Burns programme and celebrate alongside locals and visitors to Edinburgh."

Figures from Essential Edinburgh show a rise in footfall along

Rose Street of almost 16% against the same period in 2018.

'Red, Red Rose Street' presented a series of free family activities including a 'Rabbie Ramble' for children, 'Kindness Lane' a commissioned art installation from Open Close which transformed Assembly Lane with visitors adding their own messages of acts of kindness that had touched their lives, along with a programme of events and offers from local businesses as part of the festival.

Roddy Smith, Chief Executive of Essential Edinburgh, said "Edinburgh City Centre has such a rich and colourful cultural heritage, Burns&Beyond with Johnnie Walker showcased this at a time of year that is usually quieter in the city centre. It is a great addition to the festival calendar and a superb opportunity to showcase our fantastic shops, venues and leisure offerings as part of Red, Red Rose Street."

Burns&Beyond will return in January 2020.