

## Early Years Activity Pack

# Robert Burns Birthplace Museum – Self led

*Scots language and poetry themed fun for early years*



Curriculum for Excellence Level: Early (Pre 5 - Primary 1)



## How to use this resource

### *Scots language and poetry themed fun for early years*



Hello and welcome to your Robert Burns Birthplace Museum Activity Pack for teachers. Everything you will need is explained in this document. In here you will find fun activities for you and your pupils designed to help you find your way around Robert Burns Birthplace Museum, as well as a mystery object for them to find in each section.

We hope you enjoy your visit!

## Aims and achievements:

### What your pupils will achieve:

- A deeper understanding of the Scots language,
- A deeper understanding of a selection of the themes in Robert Burns's poetry
- An in depth knowledge of items in the museum's collection
- Ability to associate words and language with a visual stimulus and associate action and movement with words and meanings.

### What skills your pupils will develop:

- Word association between images and language (English and Scots).
- The ability to empathise with and understand different literary characters
- Use of different languages (English and Scots).
- The ability to work as part of a team and on their own.
- Increased confidence through participation in group activities and performance.
- Listening and observation skills.



# Nursery – Primary 1

## Activity 1: The Whispering Gallery



*Learn more about the themes of 'Tae a Mouse' and Burns's motivation for writing it.*

Lesson objectives:

- Increase use of Scots language
- Develop knowledge of Burns poetry and the ability to empathise with one of his characters

Curriculum for Excellence:

LIT o-02a/Eng o-03a

Lit o-10a

EXA o-26a

## Activity

Ask pupils to look around the walls, what can they see? They should pick up on the corn graphics. Tell the class that you are now standing in a field, because Robert Burns was a farmer. Cover the story of Burns's poem: Tae a Mouse.

Once upon a time...

The weather was getting colder, the wind was blowing harder, and a wee mousie was working hard to build himself a new home. He had found a lovely field to build his house in so that he could be cozie and warm for the winter.

But one day, while the mousie was sleeping in his new bed, a farmer named Robert came to plough the field he was sleeping in. Without realising what he was doing, he ploughed over the mousie's home and destroyed it!

The poor wee mousie ran away as fast as he could, leaving his new home behind him.





Ask your pupils to think about the story they have just heard.

How do they think the mousie felt?

How do they think Robert Burns would have felt knowing he had destroyed somebody's home?

How would the class feel if they destroyed somebody's home? What might they do to apologise?

Tell the class that Robert Burns felt very sad when he realised what he had done. He was so sad, that he decided to write a poem to the poor wee mousie to say sorry. Read the first stanza to the class, and explain to them that it is written in Scots, the language Burns would have spoken.

## Tae a Mouse

Wee, sleekit, cow'rin, tim'rous beastie,  
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!  
Thou need na start awa sae hasty,  
Wi' bickering brattle!  
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,  
Wi' murd'ring pattle!

*End of Activity 1 – Take your class into the Man O' Pairs section.*





### Activity 2: Man O' pairs

*Find out more about individual objects in the museum collection belonging to Burns.*

Lesson objectives:

- Relate Robert Burns's life to the modern day
- Experience the excitement of finding objects owned by the Burns family.

Curriculum for Excellence:

SOC o-02a

LIT o-04a



## Activity

Take your pupils to the Man O' Pairs board in the centre of the section and explain that the different parts of his brain represent different things he was interested in, and that these things helped him write his poetry. Cover what each of the different words mean and encourage your class to talk about what they themselves are interested in.

Take your class to the blue cupboards in the corner of the section and ask them to look inside. Explain that all of these objects belonged to Robert Burns. What can they see? Read out the information panels on the back of the cupboard door.

Encourage your pupils to use the interactive screens in this section. Who can make the silliest picture of Robert Burns? Who can get their silhouette taken (a popular pastime in the eighteenth century)?

Remind your class that one of their mystery objects is in this section (Mystery Object 1!). It is somewhere where Agnes Burns, Robert's mother would have sat. Hint: it has no arms! Pupils should find the nursing chair in the cabinet containing the objects belonging to Burns's parents.

*End of Activity 2 – Take your class to the 'Inspired by' section.*



## Activity 3: Inspired by...



*Learn more about what inspired Robert Burns to write his poetry*

Lesson objectives:

- Develop creative skills by finding and drawing mystery objects
- Increase understanding of how people are inspired to write

Curriculum for Excellence:

SOC o-02a

LIT o-26a

## Activity

First take your class to the 'Nature' cabinet. Tell them that Robert Burns loved nature and wrote about lots of different plants and animals. Ask pupils to remember the story they heard in the Whispering Gallery. What animal was it about? Who can remember what happened to the animal?

Tell your class that they have a mystery object to find in this section (Mystery Object 2!), which is something that comes from nature. They can choose to draw the object they like best.

Now move on to the 'Books and Music' cabinet. Tell the class that Robert Burns also loved music. His mother would have sung a lot of songs around the house which meant he had lots of ideas to write about when he grew up. Ask your class if any of them like singing. What songs do they know? Would anybody like to sing a song?

Use the Burns jukebox to select some of his best known songs to play for the class (Suggestion: My love is like a Red Red Rose or Ae Fond Kiss). Do they like the music? How does it make them feel?

There is another mystery object to find here (Mystery Object 3!). It is a musical instrument that Burns would have played. Pupils can choose to draw either the violin or the guitar.

*End of Activity 3 – Take your class into the Fame section.*



### Activity 4: Fame!



*Using specific objects relating to Burns, explore what it means to be famous*

Lesson objectives:

- An understanding of the notion of fame, relating it to the present day
- Place the Burns Supper in context and encourage creativity.

Curriculum for Excellence:

LIT o-21b

SOC o-02a

## Activity

Explain to pupils that this area has a lot of objects which tell us all about Robert Burns's life. Ask the class if they think a lot of people have heard of Robert Burns. What is a word that describes somebody who a lot of people have heard of? Pupils should say 'famous'. Can they name any famous people living today?

Take your pupils to the display with the dinner set and the painting of the Burns Supper. Has anybody ever been to a Burns Supper? What do they know about it?

Cover the questions on pupil's worksheet: When would a Burns Supper be held? What would you usually eat at a Burns Supper?

Tell your class that they can now have the chance to plan their own Burns Supper. Encourage them to think about what they would have to eat, and who they would invite. They can invite their friends and family and any famous people they want! Get them to draw their Supper in the box on their sheet.

The class now has another mystery object to find (Mystery Object 4!) It is a body part belonging to Robert Burns (the skull in the medicine cabinet).

*End of Activity 4 – Take your class to the Poetry Perimeter.*



# Nursery – Primary 1

## Activity 5: Poetry Perimeter



*Find out more about some of the poems and songs that Robert Burns wrote*

Lesson objectives:

- Learn the story of Tam o' Shanter and what inspired him to write it
- Gain confidence in performance skills by singing Auld Lang Syne.

Curriculum for Excellence:

SOC o-02a

LIT o-26a

## Activity

First take your pupils to the Tam o' Shanter cabinet. Explain to them that this is one of Robert Burns's most famous poems. When he was growing up at Burns Cottage, his Auntie Betty used to tell him a lot of scary stories. This meant that when he grew up and started to write poems, he had a lot of ideas about scary things to write about.

Gather your pupils around and tell them the abridged story of Tam o' Shanter.

Once upon a time...

There lived a man whose name was Tam o' Shanter.

Tam had spent the evening in the pub, but it was now getting late so he decided to make his way home across the lang Scots miles. He climbed onto his loyal horse, Meg and began to ride.

It was a dark and stormy night... loud, deep and lang the thunder bellowed! Tam wanted to get home as quickly as possible. However, a surprise was waiting for him at Alloway's Auld Haunted Kirk.





As Tam rode past the Kirk, he saw a light in one of the windows! He climbed off his horse, crept quietly up to the window and peeked inside...

He couldn't believe what he was seeing! Inside the Kirk was a large party, but not with ordinary guests. In the middle of the room, a crowd of witches were dancing. Around them were a terrifying collection of monsters and creatures, including the De'il himself! It certainly was an unco sight.

Tam hoped to stay hidden, but the witches were very good at dancing and before he could stop himself he shouted loudly 'Weel done, Cutty Sark!'... And in an instant all was dark.

Tam knew he should not be there. He ran back to his horse, Maggie, who was waiting for him and together they ran for home.

But the witches had seen Tam and were chasing after him. He knew that witches could not cross running water, so if he could get to the bridge over the river Doon they would not be able to follow him.

The Brig O' Doon was in sight, and Meg was running as fast as she could. The pair had just reached the river when the fastest witch, Nannie, caught up with them and grabbed Meg by the tail, pulling it right off! But Tam and Meg both made it safely across the bridge.

Meg was clearly a very brave horse to save her master, even though it was at the cost of her ain grey tail!

Show your class the engravings in the cabinet and explain that they depict scenes from the poem. Can they recognise any pictures of what they have just heard?



Take your pupils to the Auld Lang Syne cabinet. Have they heard this song before? When would they normally sing it? Explain that it is a song about friendship, and teach them the words to the first verse and chorus.

## Auld Lang Syne

Should auld acquaintance be forgot?  
And never brought to mind?  
Should auld acquaintance be forgot?  
And Auld Lang Syne!

For Auld Lang Syne, my jo  
For Auld lang syne  
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet  
For Auld Lang Syne.

*End of Activity 5 – You may now want to give your pupils some free time to explore the museum on their own! Encourage them to ask questions about the objects or cases and play on the interactive games.*

