

PORTRAIT GALLERY MURALS TO BE CLEANED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A QUARTER OF A CENTURY

A set of stunning murals, which decorates the entrance hall of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery in Edinburgh, is to be cleaned for the first time in a quarter of a century, as part of a major conservation project funded by WREN, a not for profit business that awards grants to community projects from funds donated by Waste Recycling Group (WRG) to the Landfill Communities Fund.

The Scottish National Portrait Gallery opened in 1889, as the world's first purpose-built portrait gallery. The decorative scheme created by William Hole in the late 1890s for the Gallery's magnificent entrance hall, is one of the building's most striking features. It comprises a dazzling, painted procession of famous Scots (including David Livingstone, James Watt, Robert Burns, Adam Smith, David Hume, the Stuart monarchs, Robert the Bruce and Saint Ninian); a series of large-scale murals, depicting scenes from Scottish history; and a beautifully detailed mapping of the night sky, which adorns the ceiling.

The work is currently being carried out under the supervision of the National Galleries of Scotland Conservation Department, working with students from UK and overseas universities, including the Courtauld Institute of Art, London; Northumbria University, Newcastle; the Academy of Fine Arts, Stuttgart; Winterthur University, Delaware; and Metropolia University, Helsinki. The results can be seen when the Gallery, which has recently undergone a major refurbishment, re-opens on 30 November.

William Hole's decorative features have been central to the fundraising campaign behind this ambitious project. Supporters are invited to buy a star from the ceiling of the Great Hall or one of the figures from the historical frieze, including William Wallace and James Watt. So far over 320 stars have been sold and half of the figures, with many still available for those who wish to donate to the project.

Lesley Stevenson, Senior Paintings Conservator at the National Galleries of Scotland said:
“This is a unique opportunity to conserve William Hole’s great masterpiece – such an integral part of this spectacular building. We are delighted that so many young conservators are able to gain invaluable experience on this exciting project and are grateful to WREN for their generous support.”

Peter Cox, managing director of WREN, said: “WREN makes a difference to people’s lives by awarding grants to community, environmental and heritage projects across the UK. We’re delighted to support the Scottish National Portrait Gallery and this valuable work to restore the entrance to its former glory.”

WREN awards grants to community, environmental and heritage projects across the UK within 10 miles of a WRG landfill site. Funding is available for community-based projects such as village halls, children’s play areas, skate parks, museums, public parks and woodland improvements, but other projects can be eligible too. Application forms and guidance notes can be downloaded from the website and assistance is available throughout the application process. Organisations and community groups requiring funding should visit www.wren.org.uk to assess their eligibility or contact WREN on 01953 717165.

For further information and images, please call the National Galleries of Scotland Press Office on 0131 624 6314/ 247/ 325/ 332
pressinfo@nationalgalleries.org
www.nationalgalleries.org

For further press information about WREN please contact Lucy Clegg or Hannah Freeman at Tribe PR on 01603 417722 or lucy@tribepr.com

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For more details on the projects in your area, illustrative images, photo opportunities or interviews please contact: Caroline Sanderson, Grant Manager, Edinburgh & Midlothian on: 01968 661417 caroline.sanderson@wren.org.uk OR contact Head Office on 01953 717165

Editors Notes:

The Landfill Communities Fund (formerly known as the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme) gives landfill operators the opportunity to divert 6.7% of their annual Landfill Tax bill into the communities and environments around landfill sites. To date the LCF has funded over 24,000 projects with half a billion pounds in funding.

Resources: www.ltcs.org.uk www.entrust.org.uk

WREN

WREN is a not for profit business that awards grants to community, environmental and heritage projects across the UK, from funds donated by Waste Recycling Group (WRG) as part of a voluntary environmental tax credit scheme called the /landfill Communities Fund.

Since 1998, WREN has granted over £118m to more than 4,800 projects which benefit people living within 10 miles of a WRG landfill site.

Resource: www.wren.org.uk

Waste Recycling Group Limited is one of the UK's leading waste management services companies and handles in excess of 15 million tonnes of household, commercial and industrial waste each year. Around 50% of Waste Recycling Group's business is accounted for by waste management contracts with more than 40 local authorities across England, Scotland and Wales.

The Company operates facilities for the reception, recycling and disposal of waste, including a network of waste transfer and recycling centres and a regional network of operating landfill sites, and manages nearly 70 civic amenity sites on behalf of local authorities for use by the general public.

Resource: www.wrg.co.uk

