



FROM BIRTH TO BURIAL

A ROBERT BURNS JOURNEY

Group Itinerary for the Travel Trade





Robert Burns Statue



St Michael's Church



Jean Armour Statue

Group itinerary (up to 40 pax)

This itinerary is designed to read as a story rather than a schedule. Each stop represents a chapter in Burns' life, with place used to reveal character: the farmer-poet, the social thinker, the exciseman, the friend, and finally the national voice whose words still resonate. The journey flows south, mirroring Burns' own movements and the deepening maturity of his writing.

DAY ONE – THE MAKING OF A VOICE



Alloway, Ayrshire – Beginnings

The journey begins at Burns' birthplace, grounding guests in the rural world that shaped his outlook, humour and empathy for ordinary people. This is where Burns' lifelong themes emerge: equality, love, satire and the dignity of labour.

Alloway in Ayrshire is the centre for Robert Burns heritage, featuring the extensive [Robert Burns Birthplace Museum](#). Key attractions include the 18th-century thatched cottage where the poet was born in 1759, the nearby Auld Kirk, the Brig o' Doon and a dedicated museum housing a remarkable collection of manuscripts and personal belongings.



Robert Burns Birthplace Museum



On the Road – Sanquhar and the Culture of Conversation

As the coach passes into Dumfries & Galloway, through Sanquhar, guests are introduced to the story of the former Whigham's Inn, later known as the Queensberry Arms (presently being renovated by the community). Burns travelled through Sanquhar regularly and frequently stopped here to meet his friend, the landlord Edward Whigham—an association that inspired his poem, 'At Whigham's Inn, Sanquhar'. Directly opposite sits Sanquhar's Post Office—the oldest in the world and another regular port of call for the poet.

Burns is believed to have encountered fellow writers and thinkers here, part of a wider network of informal literary exchange across the south of Scotland. This pass-by moment reinforces that Burns' work was shaped as much by conversation and companionship as by solitude and pen.

The journey continues towards Dumfries. Options for lunch stops might include the Buccleuch & Queensberry Arms or Friars Carse Country House Hotel, once the home of Burns' good friends The Riddell family.



Friars Carse Country House Hotel





Ellisland Museum & Farm – The Creative Heart

Ellisland Museum & Farm was the only home designed and built by Robert Burns in 1788. The unspoiled farm buildings and surrounding landscape offer an authentic setting to explore Burns' life and writing during one of his most productive periods.

Inspired by Ellisland's "sweet poetic ground", Burns wrote around 25% of his works here, including Auld Lang Syne, My Heart's in the Highlands and On Seeing a Wounded Hare.

At Ellisland Museum & Farm guests take part in engaging experiences, split into smaller groups, that bring Burns' life and language vividly to life.

Guided Tour An introductory tour exploring Burns' move from Edinburgh to Ellisland, the challenges of farming the land and the circumstances that eventually led him to take up the position of Exciseman.

The Auld Lang Syne Experience An exploration of the origins and global legacy of Auld Lang Syne, written during Burns' time at Ellisland. Guests learn about the meaning of the song before joining a shared singing moment, with the option of a celebratory dram.



Ellisland Museum & Farm



The Spence, Ellisland Museum & Farm



Dumfries – The Last Years

Following the visit to Ellisland, the group arrives in Dumfries and checks in at the [Cairndale Hotel & Spa](#).

While many other places are associated with Burns, the poet spent the last eight years of his life in and around Dumfries moving with his young expanding family, immersing himself in the local culture, frequenting the local pubs (or Howffs) some of which still stand today, and attending church on Sundays.

Dying at the tender age of 37 Burns has left his mark on the town of Dumfries and the surrounding area of Nithsdale. It is the place where he died and was buried, and since then people have come here to pay their respects to the memory of Scotland's national poet.

Time allowing, guests may join a guided walking tour "In the Footsteps of Burns", including [Robert Burns House](#) where Burns spent his final years, and the Burns Mausoleum in St Michael's Kirkyard – a place of reflection and national remembrance.



Burns Mausoleum



Robert Burns House





Evening - [The Globe Inn: Burns at Table](#)

Dinner this evening takes place at The Globe Inn, Burns' preferred inn and one of the most authentic surviving Burns interiors in Scotland.

Established in 1610, the Globe was Burns' favourite "howff" (public house). Before dinner, guests can enjoy a guided storytelling tour of the historic rooms, discovering Burns artefacts including his bed, his razor and verses inscribed onto the windowpanes. Guests may even sit in Burns' chair and recite lines from his poetry. Dinner is served at 1610 at The Globe Inn, a Michelin-listed restaurant showcasing modern Scottish cuisine using seasonal, locally sourced ingredients.

Optional enhancements such as private readings or musical storytelling, delivered by Mostly Ghostly, can further bring Burns' words to life in the very place where he once shared them.



Robert Burns Chair, The Globe Inn

DAY TWO – RELECTION, INFLUENCE AND SPIRIT



[Theatre Royal Dumfries – Burns and the Stage](#)

After breakfast and check-out from the hotel, the group begins the day with a short walk to Theatre Royal Dumfries, Scotland's oldest working theatre, built in 1792.

Robert Burns was among the original subscribers who helped fund the theatre and wrote prologues for the Dumfries theatre company. His ballad opera The Jolly Beggars reflects his enthusiasm for performance and the lively theatre culture of the time.

During a guided heritage tour, guests explore the auditorium, backstage areas and dressing rooms before stepping onto the stage itself. Guides share stories of theatre traditions, stagecraft and over 230 years of performance history. Guests may even be invited to recite a short extract from Burns' work from the stage.



The Globe Inn



[Brow Well – A Quiet Farewell](#)

Leaving Dumfries, the group travels south along the Solway coast to Brow Well.

During the 18th century, Brow Well was renowned in Dumfriesshire for the apparent healing qualities of its waters. When his health started to deteriorate in 1796, Burns visited the Brow Well. We now know that Burns' 'flying gout' was rheumatic fever, and three days after his visit to Brow Well, he died at Robert Burns House, Dumfries.

It is likely that having drunk from the well that Burns would have walked just a few metres on and emersed himself the Solway Firth. This is certainly worth the walk both for the views of Criffel in the distance and the landscape that shows nature at its best.



Theatre Royal Dumfries



Brow Well





Ruthwell – Ideas That Last

The journey continues to Henry Duncan's Saving Bank in Ruthwell, where the story of Reverend Henry Duncan and the world's first savings bank reflects the same Enlightenment ideals of fairness and opportunity that shaped Burns' thinking. The two briefly met when Duncan, still a boy, was introduced to the poet.

A stop at the nearby Ruthwell Cross, which dates back to the early 700s, adds historical depth to the landscape Burns knew. Due to the intimate size of these sites, we recommend that larger groups split between the two venues, which are conveniently located just half-mile apart.



Henry Duncan's Saving Bank



Annandale Distillery – Words into Spirit

The final stop is Annandale Distillery, where whisky provides a natural bridge between Burns' world and modern Scotland.

Burns worked as an Exciseman, responsible for supervising distilleries and collecting duty. Annandale's Man O'Words single malt takes its name from Burns himself – celebrating the poet whose mastery of language shaped Scotland's cultural identity.

During the guided tour, guests learn about traditional Lowland whisky making, Burns' connection with whisky and the inspiration behind the Man O'Words expression.

The visit concludes with a tasting of two single malt whiskies and lunch, providing a convivial finale to the journey before onward travel within Scotland or into northern England.



Annandale Distillery

For further information or support please contact: traveltrade@ssdalliance.com

