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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **New Fool of Muncaster!**



**A new Fool of Muncaster has just been announced at the finale of Muncaster Castle's highly successful 'Funcaster Festival of Fools'.**

**Ian Douglas**, storyteller extraordinaire from Huddersfield, was mantled in Tom Fool's coat and crowned with his hat by Gary "Gacko" Bridgens, Muncaster's Fool since 2019.

Muncaster Castle is recognised as the traditional home of “Tomfoolery” ever since the legendary Thomas Skelton, the original “Tom Fool,” was jester there in the early 17th century.

**Peter Frost-Pennington of Muncaster** enthused; “We are delighted that Ian has accepted the challenge of being our new Fool of Muncaster. Storytellers maintain our cultural heritage and enliven the treasury of folklore handed down through the mists of time. We know that Ian will be a fabulous ambassador for Muncaster and a thoughtful yet highly entertaining Fool. He has been at the heart of our Halloween ghostly castle tours for 10 years and delighted our visitors at many other events with his fabulous tales and richly deserves his new role”.



Since 2005, 18 top street theatre performers have won the coveted title “Fool of Muncaster”, whose duties include entertaining the Pennington family and the thousands of visitors who flock to the Muncaster Festival of Fools each year in late May.

**Ian Douglas** said; “I am chuffed to bits to be appointed to this prestigious and historic responsibility. I am looking forward to bringing to life more of the tales and legends that have swirled around Muncaster for centuries and sharing them with local communities and at least some of Muncaster’s many visitors. It is a great honour to be entrusted with this ancient office.”



Ian Douglas, presented with the trophy, Tom Fool's hat

As part of the ceremony Ian was presented with the trophy, a replica of Tom Fool’s hat, carved from a branch of the great tree at the front door of the castle under which Tom Fool used to sit 400 years ago telling tall tales to passing travellers.

The trophy will have Ian’s name added to the long list of previous incumbents.

He was also presented with a symbolic crate of local beer. In the royal court the Fool was paid in ale while the Poet Laurette was paid in wine.

Simon Armitage, the current Poet Laureate is also from Huddersfield and will soon be returning to perform at the **Krankenhaus Festival at Muncaster over the August Bank Holiday weekend.**

### Ends

#### Notes for Editors:

1. For press enquiries please contact Peter Frost-Pennington:

[peter@muncaster.co.uk](mailto:peter@muncaster.co.uk)

2. Local Cumbrian TV presenter Helen Skelton won the title in 2009 while visiting with Blue Peter

3. Thomas Skelton is rumoured to still be haunting the castle and gardens.

4. Muncaster Castle has been the ancestral home to the Pennington Family since at least 1208 when ownership of the land was confirmed through a charter from King John.

5. The castle sits majestically in 77 acres of wild, woodland gardens with breathtaking views of the Lake District Fells, including Scafell Pike, England's highest mountain. The castle is home to fabulous collections of art, antique furniture & textiles.

6. Muncaster is home to the Hawk & Owl Centre which presents the amazing World of Owls flying display at 11.30am each day followed by the dramatic Sky Hunters display with free flying owls, eagles, falcons and vultures at 2pm. The wild herons are fed daily at 4pm.

7. General Muncaster opening times can be found at

<https://www.muncaster.co.uk/plan-your-visit/opening-times/>

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