

News story: David Mundell to promote Scottish trade in New Zealand

Mr Mundell is visiting the North and South Islands to promote UK-New Zealand trade as the UK prepares to forge its way in the world after EU exit. He will also be promoting Scottish food and drink exports and working to strengthen ties between the two countries.

The links between Scotland and New Zealand are well established – Dunedin and Edinburgh are twinned and there is a large and active Scottish population across the country. The two countries have much in common, including rural tourism, agricultural technology, culture and education.

Mr Mundell will visit a variety of locations across New Zealand including Wellington, Christchurch, and of course, Dunedin. He will spend time with academics and government leaders, as well as businesses and entrepreneurs.

Speaking ahead of his visit, Mr Mundell said:

As we embark on a new era for Global Britain this is an important opportunity to promote Scotland and the wider UK overseas.

New Zealand is a country which already enjoys strong ties to Scotland. Our shared history goes back many years and we retain unique business and academic links. I believe our two countries can also learn from each other in areas such as agri-tech and tourism. I am looking forward to visiting Lincoln University's Research Dairy Farm to witness innovations into agri-tech such as herd welfare and the environmental impact of farming.

I'll also be meeting senior New Zealand government ministers and business leaders as part of our effort to deepen our links. The visit will be a great opportunity to promote Scotland's world leading exports such as whisky. Scotland's skills, products and services are exceptional, and I'm confident this visit will help develop trading opportunities as we leave the EU.

British Deputy High Commissioner Helen Smith said:

We are delighted to be welcoming the Secretary of State for Scotland to New Zealand. Mr Mundell is the third UK Cabinet Minister to visit New Zealand in just over a year, a sign of the strength of our bilateral relationship. Coming so soon after the launch of consultations on a bilateral free trade agreement once we leave the EU, the visit will be an opportunity to further enhance our business links. It will also be an opportunity to celebrate the strength of Scottish heritage in New Zealand and our historical and

cultural ties.

UK exports to New Zealand were worth £1.3 billion in 2016, and it is clear that there is a market for high quality goods and products from the UK. While in Wellington Mr Mundell will attend the High Commission's Annual Parliamentary whisky tasting, which brings together influential businesses and trade figures.

He will also be discussing education links between the University of Otago and Scottish institutions, particularly Strathclyde University, which has a strong program of engagement both with visiting students and research.

Mr Mundell will also spend some time at the University of Otago's Centre for Irish and Scottish Studies, to hear about their research on linguistics.

In Dunedin, Mr Mundell will meet with several high profile Scottish expats and discuss the strong links between the two countries. The first Scots to visit New Zealand arrived with Captain Cook, and it is thought that as many as 20 per cent of the first wave European settlers there came from Scotland. With a nearly 30,000-strong Scottish diaspora in 2016, it is clear that those connections are still strong.