

Thirty members of the group made the journey up to Scotland and were based in Cumbernauld, which gave easy access to both Glasgow and Edinburgh. We took in an awful lot of art and much more over the week! We were extremely lucky to have the services of a knowledgeable Blue Badge Guide for most of the time, who navigated us around the various sites with great expertise. In Glasgow, we saw some amazing stained glass in the Cathedral and visited the tomb of St. Mungo, the founder and patron saint of the city. Glasgow has several excellent museums and art galleries. At Kelvingrove we discovered the Glasgow Boys and Scottish Colourists art movements and were treated to a lunchtime organ recital in the main hall! The Hunterian Museum brought more art discoveries, plus an interesting exhibition on Mary Queen of Scots. We also saw The Mackintosh House, now an integral part of the Hunterian Art Gallery and is a careful reassembling of the main rooms from the Mackintoshes' Glasgow home. Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh were artists and designers whose style is now world famous. Together they designed their Glasgow home, which was decorated in his distinctive style.

On the second Glasgow day we visited the Burrell Collection in Pollock Park. It houses the art collection of Sir William Burrell and Constance, Lady Burrell. The museum reopened in March 2022 and our visit came just a week after the 'official' opening by King Charles III. The displays range from work by major artists including Rodin, Degas, Manet and Cézanne to important examples of late medieval art, Chinese and Islamic art, ancient civilizations and more. For many of the group, the Burrell was a highlight of the trip. In the afternoon we drove out to Hill House, near Helensburgh. Sitting high above the Clyde, Hill House is considered one of Charles Rennie Mackintosh's finest creations. The feel of the house, which was decorated with the help of Mackintosh's wife, is of restrained elegance combined with dazzling architecture.

Commissioned by Glasgow book publisher Walter Blackie, up-and-coming architect Mackintosh and Margaret Macdonald worked collaboratively to create almost everything we saw here, from the building itself to the furniture and textiles. However, the external render of the property has not proved watertight and the walls have gradually become saturated and are crumbling. To protect the House, the National Trust has enclosed it in a protective steel frame structure covered in chainmail mesh, featuring walkways around and over the top of the house.

Our first Edinburgh day included a visit to the National Gallery of Scotland. The Gallery is home to Scotland's greatest collection of European paintings and sculpture from the Renaissance to Post-Impressionist eras. An hour strolling around the gallery revealed masterpieces from Da Vinci, Botticelli, Raphael, Velázquez and Vermeer to Monet, Cézanne and Van Gogh. The most comprehensive part of the collection covers the history of Scottish painting. Works on show include Raeburn's much-loved *The Reverend Robert Walker Skating on Duddingston Loch* or, as it has become known, the 'Skating Minister.' In the afternoon we visited the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art. Modern One is housed in a neoclassical building and the collection includes works by Matisse, Picasso, Vuillard, and Dix. It includes a world-famous collection of Surrealism and Dada as well as a superb selection of paintings by Scottish artists. Our second day in Edinburgh began with a visit to the Palace of Holyrood House, the official residence in Scotland of King Charles III. Situated at the end of Edinburgh's Royal Mile against the backdrop of Arthur's Seat, our visit included the Queen's Gallery. This was staging the 'Masterpieces from Buckingham Palace' Exhibition with paintings by Gentileschi, Gerrit Dou, Jan Steen, Rembrandt and Parmigiano (*Pallas Athene*). Given a free time afternoon, some of us decided to visit the 'A Taste for Impressionism' exhibition. This spans the entire exhibition space of the Royal Scottish Academy building, and charts how Impressionism emerged from the indulgence of the Romantic period to become a radical movement, through to the price-shattering auction phenomenon it is today. All too soon our trip was over, although we did squeeze in a visit to Salford on the way back to visit the Lowry Gallery, since we had studied his work earlier in the year.

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