



## Art in Scotland

Great cities, spectacular museums

**15–22 May 2026 (MM 965)**

8 day

Expert speaker: Desmond Shawe-Taylor

Well-stocked and enjoyable galleries, many recently renewed, all welcoming.

Art from around the world, with Scottish painting a highlight.

A clutch of the most handsome cities in Britain, particularly good for Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian architecture.

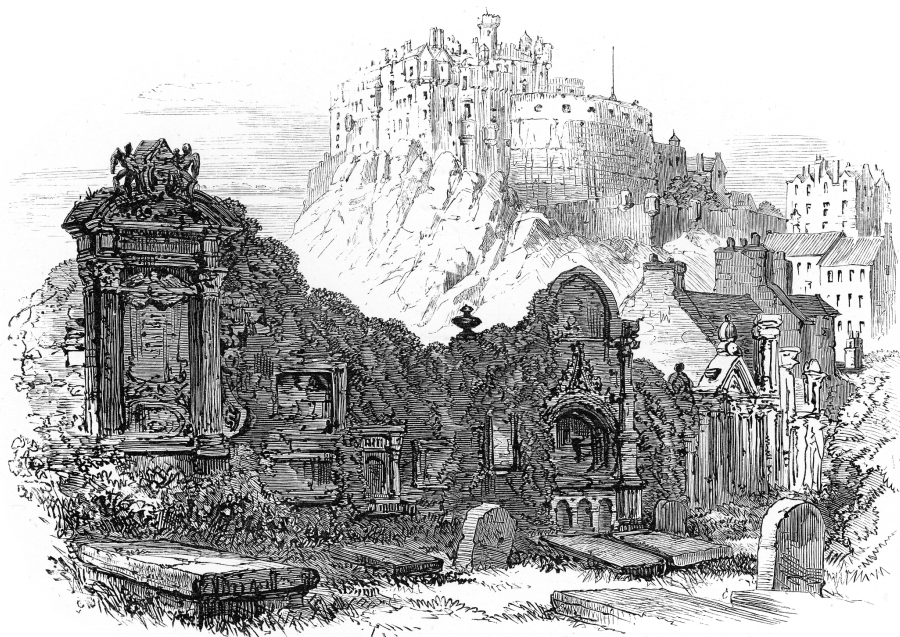
The Burrell Collection emerged in 2022 from six years of radical refurbishment. Those who knew it before might wonder how improvement is possible, but the consensus is that one of the best of the world's boutique art galleries just got better.

The new-ish V&A Dundee also beckons, its hulking ship-like form on the historic waterfront making it architecturally the most striking art museum in Britain. Aberdeen Art Gallery was joint winner of the Museum of the Year award in 2020, after major remodelling, while it's not long since the McManus Art Gallery and Museum, also in Dundee, underwent a thorough makeover.

There's a theme emerging here. And so far there has been no mention of Glasgow and Edinburgh. Scotland's two biggest cities are internationally known for their cultural life and collections of historic and contemporary art.

There are artworks from around the world, but Scottish art may come as a revelation. Some names will be familiar – Allan Ramsay, Gavin Hamilton, Henry Raeburn, David Wilkie, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, John Bellamy; you have probably heard of the Glasgow Boys and Scottish Colourists, if not often seen their works; many others may be unknown to you, and you will wonder why.

All four cities are among the most handsome in Britain, while the beauty of Edinburgh places it among a select global few. A medieval quarter tumbles down from the hilltop castle and smooths into an extensive grid of ultra-elegant Georgian architecture on more even land below. Glasgow was for a while the second city in the British Isles and reached its peak in the age of trade, manufacturing and empire. The granite city of Aberdeen was flourishing long before the recent oil boom, and Dundee was a major port with civic and commercial buildings to match.



*Edinburgh Castle from Greyfriars cemetery, wood engraving c. 1890.*

We recommend that you consider staying extra nights before and/or after the tour to see more of the glories of Glasgow and Edinburgh than the itinerary can accommodate.

### Itinerary

**Day 1: Glasgow environs.** The coach leaves the hotel at 2.00pm and Glasgow Central Station at 2.20pm. Drive to Pollok Park outside Glasgow to the Burrell Collection, a wonderfully eclectic collection including Chinese ceramics, French Impressionists, medieval stained glass, global textiles, etc. that was assembled by shipowner Sir William Burrell in the early 20th century. Beautifully displayed here from 1983, the gallery reopened in 2022 after major upgrading and enlarging. First of two nights in Glasgow.

**Day 2: Glasgow.** Start the day at the arts section of The Hunterian, a wide-ranging university museum: James McNeill Whistler, the Glasgow Boys, Scottish Colourists and – famously – Margaret MacDonald and Charles Rennie Mackintosh, including the interiors of their Glasgow home. Nearby Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, opened 1901, is housed in red sandstone splendour exuding the self-confidence of the second city of the Empire. The holdings are extensive and wide-ranging, the painting collection internationally significant

with major works by Rembrandt, Van Gogh and Salvador Dali, a good selection of French Impressionists and dazzling displays of the Glasgow Boys and the Scottish Colourists.

**Day 3: Glasgow, Dundee, Aberdeen.** Travel in the morning to Dundee, most likeable of Victorian cities, now transitioning from its industrial origins into a cultural hub. The core of the McManus Art Gallery and Museum is a building by George Gilbert Scott (1865), but it has several times been extended. Here is the best collection of Victorian Scottish painting, good English works, 20th-century art and contemporary ceramics. Opened in 2018, Kengo Kuma's V&A Dundee has an excellent display of Scottish arts and crafts and changing exhibitions. Continue to Aberdeen for the first of two nights.

**Day 4: Aberdeen.** Opened in 1885 and re-opened in 2019 after refurbishment by Hopkins Architects, the Art Gallery is one of the best in regional Britain. The painting collection includes Old Masters, French Impressionists and historic British works, and is particularly strong on Scottish 20th-century and contemporary. King's College in Old Aberdeen was founded in 1495, and the chapel has medieval wood carving and Art Nouveau stained glass.

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continued

**Day 5: Aberdeen, Glamis, Edinburgh.** Home of the Earls of Strathmore since 1372, Glamis Castle is known from Shakespeare's Macbeth and as the Queen Mother's childhood home. A soaring, formidable castle principally of the 16th and 17th centuries, further 'baronialised' in the 19th, it contains many treasures. Continue to Edinburgh for the first of three nights.

**Day 6: Edinburgh.** Within the British Isles the Scottish National Gallery is second only to its counterpart in London for the richness, range and quality of its collection of European paintings from the Renaissance onwards. An afternoon walk through streets and squares in one of the most beautiful cities in Europe.

**Day 7: Edinburgh.** See first a former Victorian church with spectacular Arts and Crafts murals by Phoebe Anna Traquair. By the same architect, Sir Robert Rowland Anderson, the Scottish National Portrait Gallery is a splendid building with a magnificent collection, the history of Scotland through personalities and great art. Some free time – possibilities include the Georgian House in Charlotte Square, Holyroodhouse and the Queen's Gallery, and, depending on exhibitions, the Royal Scottish Academy or City Art Centre.

**Day 8: Edinburgh.** The Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art is home to an outstanding collection of modern and contemporary art. In the surrounding park are sculptures by Miró, Moore, Hepworth and Whiteread, and the indoor collections include works by Matisse, Picasso and Dix, a world-famous collection of Surrealism and Dada and a rollcall of the leading Scottish artists. The tour finishes at Edinburgh Waverley train station at c.1.00pm. The coach continues to the hotel.

## Speaker

**Desmond Shawe-Taylor.** Distinguished art historian and museum administrator whose posts have included Surveyor of The Queen's Pictures and Director of Dulwich Picture Gallery. He studied English Literature at Oxford and took an MA in History of Art at the Courtauld Institute. He has written extensively on English 18th-century portraiture and other subjects, and curated a series of exhibitions at the Queen's Gallery in Edinburgh and London, examining Dutch and Flemish 17th-century art.

## Practicalities

**Included:** accommodation in three good hotels; travel by private coach, rail and occasionally taxi; breakfasts and five dinners with drinks; all admissions; all tips; the services of the speaker and tour manager.

**Accommodation.** **Kimpton Blythswood Square, Glasgow** ([kimptonhotels.com](http://kimptonhotels.com)): overlooking Blythswood Square, currently the city's only five-star hotel. **The Marcliffe Hotel & Spa, Aberdeen** ([marcliffe.com](http://marcliffe.com)): 3 miles from the railway station, well planted private grounds, lovely traditional styling. **InterContinental Edinburgh** ([edinburgh.intercontinental.com](http://edinburgh.intercontinental.com)): excellently located in George Street. *Single rooms are doubles for sole use throughout.*

**How strenuous?** There is quite a lot of walking and standing around in galleries. You should be able to walk at three miles an hour for at least half an hour.

**Group size:** between 10 and 22 participants.