

National
Museums
Scotland



REVIEW

2012

Who we are

We care for museum collections of national and international importance, presenting and interpreting them for a broad public audience. Our wealth of treasures represents everything from Scottish and international archaeology to applied arts and design; from world cultures and social history to science, technology and the natural world.

We work with museums and communities across Scotland and beyond, introducing our collections to a much wider audience than can physically visit our museums, through partnerships, touring exhibitions, community engagement, digital delivery and loans.

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Building on success

It has been a year of significant achievement. The transformed National Museum of Scotland reopened in July 2011 to public and critical acclaim. We welcomed a record 2.5 million visits to our museums, and have met or exceeded every target across our wide programme of activity.

We are delighted that more people than ever enjoyed our museums and collections in 2011–12. With 3.8 million visits across our museums and website, the last year has been our most successful ever. It has been particularly rewarding to see, in challenging economic times, the inspiration museums can bring to people of all ages.

This year we have significantly improved our estate through the highly successful transformation of the National Museum of Scotland. Work is already underway to build on this, with support pledged by the Heritage Lottery Fund to create eight new galleries for our internationally significant collections of European art and design, and science and technology. We are also planning to develop further the National Museum of Flight, to enhance the visitor experience, broaden audiences and improve the care of our collections. Alongside this, we continue to run a dynamic programme of events and exhibitions at all our sites and have extended our digital activities.

Inspired by our collections and their worldwide connections, we seek to make an impact far beyond our museums. In Scotland, we are delivering activity in all 32 local authority areas, including loans, partnerships and

training. Internationally, we have enhanced our links with partners in countries with Scottish diaspora communities, alongside exciting joint work on exhibitions, research and more in countries as diverse as Russia and Malawi. Significant loans of objects at home and abroad also extend our reach.

Over the year we were particularly pleased to have strengthened our collections with a series of major acquisitions, such as the truly magnificent Hamilton-Rothschild tazza. To safeguard the future of these national collections, expansion of our Collection Centre continues apace, with support from the Scottish Government to relocate and store our objects in state-of-the-art facilities.

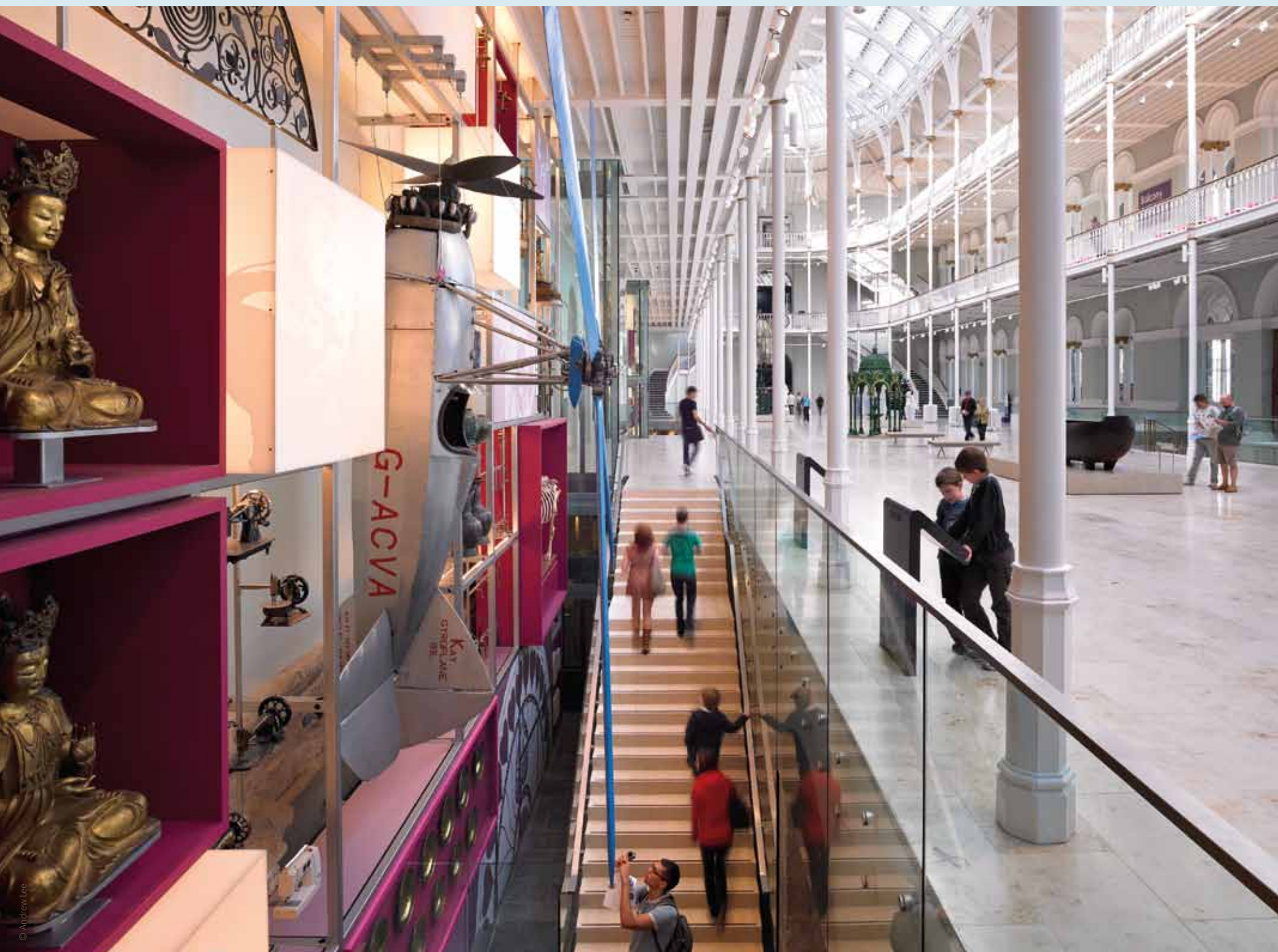
Generous funding awards, partnership support and the commitment of many donors, supporters and volunteers continue to help us deliver projects that otherwise would not be possible. We are warmly grateful for their generosity. We take inspiration from their enthusiasm, and that of our many visitors, in our work to build collections and exhibitions of which the people of Scotland can be proud.

*Bruce Minto, Chair
Gordon Rintoul, Director*



1. Rare enigma cipher machine of the type used on German submarines during the Second World War
 2. Families enjoy our InfoZone 3. Inventor Dr John C Taylor with the Midsummer Chronophage
 4. 16th century St Porchaire ewer from our European Art and Design collections

Inspiring visitors



The £47m transformation of the National Museum of Scotland has been a remarkable success story. We welcomed 2.3 million visits in the first 12 months – an overwhelming public response, supported by significant awards and international critical acclaim. Work has now begun on the next stage of our Masterplan to display important art and science collections and engage the broadest possible audience.

It has been an amazing year for the National Museum of Scotland. A spectacular opening ceremony in July 2011 saw nearly 6,000 people gather in Chambers Street before the doors opened, and a record 22,000 people visited that day. Further landmarks were quickly met: 100,000 visitors in six days, a million in four months, and 2.3 million in the first year. This far surpassed expectations, at more than double that which we set out to achieve and nearly three times our previous record.

This ambitious £47m project was supported by a grant of £18m from the Heritage Lottery Fund and £16m from the Scottish Government. A highly successful fundraising campaign generated £13m – £1m ahead of target – from over 1,000 generous donors.

The Museum is now the most-visited attraction outside London, with the largest year-on-year growth by a significant margin. It also joined the Top 30 most popular museums in the world for 2011, only five months after opening. A number of high-profile awards have followed including the Andrew Doolan Award for Best Building in Scotland, a Royal Institution of British Architects Award, two Civic Trust Awards and the Museums & Heritage Award for Excellence for the quality of the displays.

The transformed National Museum of Scotland: "The place has been reborn, light, bright and miraculously coherent", Duncan Macmillan, *The Scotsman*.

Visitor research shows an overwhelmingly positive response, with high levels of overall satisfaction and significant engagement. We are reaching a much broader audience and significantly more people from overseas as well as Scotland and the UK.

Building on this success, work is moving forward at a pace to complete our 15-year Masterplan with the creation of a further eight new galleries to showcase our internationally important science and technology and European art and design collections. Around 75% of the objects in the galleries will be going on display for the first time for a generation or more. The displays, due for completion in 2016, will champion excellence and innovation, offering an inspirational resource for the scientists, engineers, artists and designers of tomorrow.

Fundraising is already underway and we were delighted in July 2012 when the Heritage Lottery Fund pledged £4.85m towards this £11.85m project. If you would like to find out more about the campaign, please contact the Development team on 0131 247 4095 or email development@nms.ac.uk.



1. The Country Fair at the National Museum of Rural Life 2. The *Catherine the Great* exhibition staged with the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg 3. 11,000 people attended the Airshow at the National Museum of Flight 4. Our after-hours events, the RBS Museum Lates, have been a sell-out

Growing audiences

An engaging programme of exhibitions, events and online activity inspires people of all ages to learn more about Scotland and the world around us. In 2011–12 we welcomed a record 2.5 million visits to our museums, up 90% on the previous year, as well as 1.3 million website visits.

Over 160,000 people enjoyed our special exhibitions programme at the National Museum of Scotland designed to bring global perspectives and attract new audiences. Subjects ranged from the neglected story of one of Scotland's great naval heroes Admiral Cochrane, who inspired fictional heroes in *Hornblower* and *Master and Commander*, to contemporary jewellery created and inspired by places in Sweden, Norway, Iceland, Finland, Denmark and Scotland.

The enhanced exhibition space at the National Museum of Scotland hosted two major international exhibitions bringing cultural treasures from around the world to our visitors. *Fascinating Mummies* featured materials from one of the world's leading Ancient Egyptian collections, held by the National Museum of Antiquities in the Netherlands, alongside our own treasures. It attracted over 60,000 visitors and was supported by the Patrons of National Museums Scotland. *Catherine the Great: An Enlightened Empress* told the remarkable story of one of the world's most powerful rulers through the greatest collection of Russian treasures ever seen in the UK. Made possible through our continuing partnership with the State Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg and the generous support of Baillie Gifford Investment Managers, this exhibition was welcomed with critical acclaim, enjoying four and five star reviews. The BBC's *Culture Show* referred to it as "an immaculate collection".

Visitors also enjoyed *Reconstructing Lives* at the National War Museum, a moving look at those who have lost limbs in war and the technology which helps rebuild their lives, as well as *See Scotland by Train*, a beautiful collection of railway poster art at the National Museum of Scotland.

Over 190,000 people took part in our learning events programme which helped us reach new audiences. This included the RBS Museum Lates, award-winning, after-hours events for young people, RBS Museum Talks, a series of discussions with high-profile speakers, and our largest ever community event, *The City Sings*. Events at the National Museum of Flight such as the popular annual Airshow attracted over 20,000 people and 7,000 people enjoyed events inspired by countryside themes at the National Museum of Rural Life. Expanded learning and classroom areas attracted nearly 50,000 school pupils over the year.

Beyond our museums, independent evaluation showed our media coverage generated 8.70 million opportunities to see, read or hear about National Museums Scotland in the UK and international media. Innovative use of technology helped engage audiences in new ways. Digital access was developed for over 10,000 objects, a new mobile app was created for the National Museum of Scotland as well as interactive games inspired by our exhibitions and collections, and we extended our use of social media.



© Douglas Robertson

Over 55,000 people enjoyed our Edinburgh International Science Festival events at the National Museum of Scotland and National Museum of Flight in 2012 including InMotion, a series of activities celebrating human movement and performance, and joint events with the University of Edinburgh.



This year saw focused development of the collections through significant acquisitions which help illustrate the story of Scotland and its place in the world. Our programme of collections-based research received new recognition and we have made significant steps forward to improve storage at the National Museums Collection Centre.



Developing collections

As custodians of Scotland's national collections, our responsibility is to ensure that the objects in our care are conserved, understood, appreciated and made available to future generations. During the year, over 120 academic publications were produced and the outcomes communicated widely, notably through our expanded online Research Repository.

Much of our research integrates with public programmes and partnerships. Significant fossil finds from the Scottish Borders, hailed by Sir David Attenborough as 'wonderful and exciting', were displayed at the National Museum of Scotland. Linked to this, we secured a three-year Natural Environment Research Council award to better understand their nature and importance. This work will be delivered as part of a consortium with the British Geological Survey and the universities of Cambridge, Leicester and Southampton.

We acquired the archive of the internationally renowned Scottish-based textile designer Bernat Klein, and received support from the Clothworkers Guild to conserve, catalogue and prepare material for display. Support from the Arts and Humanities Research Council is also allowing us to carry our pioneering research on the history, culture and design of tweed.

Working in partnership with the Victoria and Albert Museum, we saved for the nation a pair of 17th century Italian Baroque tables by Lucio de Lucci which had an export bar placed on them. The acquisition, made possible with funding from the Art Fund, the Heritage Lottery Fund, the National Museums Scotland Charitable Trust, the Friends of the V&A and the Horn Bequest, ensures these cultural treasures remain in the United Kingdom for public display.

The Hamilton-Rothschild cup or 'tazza' (shown on the cover of this Review) was acquired in lieu of inheritance tax from the estate of the late Edmund de Rothschild. It is the most valuable single item to enter our collection for decades. Similarly, we acquired in lieu of inheritance tax a superb rococo giltwood sofa designed for Spencer House, London. This is the only piece from the famous Palm Room suite in a UK museum.

Another major focus is ensuring the future care of our collections through further development at the National Museums Collection Centre. An £8.7m capital grant from the Scottish Government has enabled us to vacate old storage premises at South Queensferry and start building new energy-efficient facilities at the Collection Centre for completion by spring 2015.

State-of-the-art storage facilities at the National Museums Collection Centre help safeguard and preserve our collections for future generations, such as this religious banner embroidered in an Edinburgh convent in 1908.

1. Our Turkey Red printed cotton collection is the focus of a major research project with the University of Edinburgh
2. Recent acquisitions like this i-limb ultra from Touch Bionics featured in *Reconstructing Lives* at the National War Museum
3. Researching Bernat Klein tweed for future display
4. 17th century Italian Baroque tables on display at the National Museum of Scotland

Partnerships at home and abroad strengthen our knowledge, help promote Scotland and make our treasures available to the widest possible audience. The successful transformation of the National Museum of Scotland and new links established by staff this year have significantly increased our international profile.



1. Visit by the official Representative of Taiwan in the UK, Dr Shen Lyushun 2. The iconic Whithorn Crozier lent to the Whithorn Trust, Dumfries and Galloway 3. Preparing objects for the *Dr Livingstone, I Presume?* exhibition 4. We supported Glasgow Museums in the acquisition of a longcase clock by Peter Wylie Davidson

Increasing connections

Through a new international programme, we now have strategic partnerships with seven countries and over a hundred other global links. Following the successful transformation of the National Museum of Scotland, we welcomed many more diplomatic and museum delegations in 2011–12 including visitors from Russia, China, Japan, the USA and Australia.

Two new exhibitions with international partners are being developed for 2013: *Vikings!* from the Historiska Museet in Stockholm, and *Mary Queen of Scots*, curated by National Museums Scotland from our own Scottish collections and international loans.

With Scottish Government support, we are working with the Museums of Malawi on a skills development project which marks the bicentenary of the birth of the Scottish missionary and explorer David Livingstone. We are also hosting our own exhibition at the National Museum of Scotland, *Dr Livingstone, I Presume?*, which is part of the Livingstone 200 programme and runs until April 2013.

An active loans programme, up 7% on the previous year, ensures audiences across Scotland and beyond can access our collections. International loans include items representing tartan to the Museum für Kommunikation in Berlin and Frankfurt, Celtic treasures to the Landesmuseum Württemberg in Stuttgart and objects from our successful lighthouses exhibition *Shining Lights* to the Musée national de la Marine, Paris.



At home, we have formal partnerships with a number of regional museums, and deliver training, loans, outreach and knowledge exchange support to all 32 local authority areas. Highlights included the hugely successful touring exhibition *The Lewis Chessmen: Unmasked*, in partnership with the British Museum, which ended its tour in 2011–12. This was shown at the Aberdeen Art Gallery, Shetland Museum & Archives and Museum nan Eilean, Stornoway, as well as the National Museum of Scotland, and attracted over 122,000 visitors.

The loans programme benefits venues across Scotland, from the Inverness Museum to the Whithorn Trust in Dumfries and Galloway. New attractions have also received support, such as the refurbished Royal Apartments at Stirling Castle and the new visitor centre at Abbotsford, home of Sir Walter Scott. The 18-month Museum2Go project, funded by the Robertson Trust, created four new 'loans boxes' for touring to schools and nurseries.

We also administer the National Fund for Acquisitions on behalf of Scottish Ministers. During the year, we supported 32 organisations across Scotland with 72 separate grants payments totalling £143,000 which enabled purchases to the total value of £384,000.

Our cultural partnership with The Glenmorangie Company supports the research and understanding of Early Medieval Scotland and our collections, with the findings published in a major new book this year.

We are extremely grateful to all our donors and corporate supporters who have contributed to the on-going success of National Museums Scotland this year.

With grateful thanks

KEY FUNDERS

The Scottish Government
The Heritage Lottery Fund

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The Art Fund
Arts and Humanities Research Council
The Binks Trust
The Clothworkers' Foundation
Creative Scotland
Edinburgh Decorative and Fine Arts Society
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
The Misses Barrie Charitable Trust
Mondriaan Fund
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And to all those who prefer to remain anonymous.



The Fantastic Flight display, National Museum of Flight

If you would like to find out how you can support our work, please contact our Development team on 0131 247 4095 or development@nms.ac.uk



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in large print, in Braille and on CD.

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www.nms.ac.uk/aboutus

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Cover image and above detail:
The magnificent Hamilton-Rothschild tazza, the most valuable
single object to enter the National Collections for decades.