

Major new galleries open at the National Museum of Scotland

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The new galleries have allowed the display of some rather large objects!

The new state-of-the-art galleries, which are dedicated to decorative art, design, fashion science and technology, are the latest phase in an £80million Masterplan to transform the Museum and showcase the breadth of its world class collections.

As one of the world's great museums, the National Museum of Scotland uniquely brings together science and art, the natural world and the diversity of human cultures, inviting visitors to explore the world under one roof.

The innovative new galleries, created in collaboration with award-winning practice Hoskins Architects and exhibition specialists Metaphor, encourage visitors to take a journey of discovery. The redevelopment of the magnificent Grade A listed Victorian building restores the Museum's original layout and sightlines. Over 3,000 objects are now on display across the new galleries, three-quarters of which have not been shown for at least a generation. Visitors will experience the collections like never before, with in-depth information provided through a network of digital labels, audio visual programmes, a wide range of interactive exhibits and original working machines – totalling over 150 interactive exhibits.

The suite of six new Science and Technology galleries are the UK's most comprehensive outside London, and establish the National Museum of Scotland as a key centre for science engagement. The galleries feature objects covering over 250 years of enquiry and innovation, with worldwide resonance in areas as diverse as engineering, medicine, transport, communication, physics and chemistry. Highlights include one of the two oldest railway locomotives in the world; a two-tonne Copper Cavity from CERN's Large Electron Positron Collider; three Formula 1 racing cars, including David Coulthard's Red Bull team car; an Apple-1, one of the world's first personal home computers; the world's first pneumatic tyre, developed in Scotland by John Boyd Dunlop; Britain's oldest motorcycle; one of John Logie Baird's earliest televisions; as well as ground-breaking contemporary initiatives like the world's first bionic arm and a mouse kidney grown from stem cells.

Major funding from Wellcome has enabled a new focus on biomedical science. The topics covered include the science of genetics with Dolly the sheep, the development of new pharmaceuticals and advances in prosthetics and body implants. Key objects include medals awarded to: Sir Alexander Fleming for the discovery of penicillin; Sir David Jack for developing asthma inhalers; and Sir James Black for his invention of the first successful beta-blocker and modern anti-ulcer drug.

A dramatic atrium showcases a spectacular aerial squadron of iconic aircraft, including Percy Pilcher's Hawk, the earliest British aircraft, and a 1940 Tiger Moth biplane.

All the displays aim to offer an enjoyable and inspiring experience, enabling visitors to discover our past, present and potential futures. Children and adults alike can enjoy memorable hands-on activities, including newly restored 19th-century working engineering models; a Formula 1 racing car simulator; working hot-air balloons; and a human-sized hamster wheel which visitors can drive to generate illuminating electricity.

The displays will be supported by an extensive new programme of activities and events providing deeper engagement with the science collections and scientific issues.

Treasures in the four new Art, Design and Fashion galleries showcase excellence, creativity and innovation. From precious medieval gothic treasures to the work of today's leading names in contemporary craft, design and fashion they provide a broad and fascinating picture of British, European and international artistic achievement and enterprise.

Three of the galleries span sculpture, metalwork, ceramics, glass, furniture and woodwork. Highlights include pieces by Picasso; an ornate panelled wall from Hamilton Palace, once one of the greatest treasure houses in Europe; the 17th-century Kinghorne table carpet from Glamis Castle; rolls of hand-printed 19th century panoramic French wallpaper never before displayed; and the travelling-set of Princess Pauline Borghese, given to her by her brother the Emperor Napoleon.

A landmark new Fashion and Style gallery displays key items from National Museums Scotland's world-class collection of fashion and textiles. Its dramatic presentation showcases clothing and accessories from the 17th century to the present day, with a central 'catwalk' celebrating significant designers like Vivienne Westwood, Paco Rabanne and Comme des Garçons. Highlights also include items from the celebrated Jean Muir collection – one of the largest fashion designer archives held by any museum in the world – as well as items from the wardrobe of Frances Farquharson, the 1930s Fashion Editor of Vogue, known for her flamboyant style.

Gordon Rintoul, Director of National Museums Scotland, said: "It is fitting that in this, our 150th anniversary year, we unveil the latest phase in the transformation of the National Museum of Scotland. These ten major new galleries aim to excite and engage our visitors both today and for generations to come. I look forward to welcoming people to the galleries and hope they will enjoy their visits and be inspired by our exceptional collections and innovative displays."

Lucy Casot, Head of HLF Scotland, said: "It is apt that as we celebrate the Year of Innovation, Architecture and Design, these new galleries welcome visitors in to explore and be inspired by what Scotland has given to the world. HLF is delighted that, thanks to National Lottery players, we have helped fund the transformation of the National Museum since it began ten years ago. Today, the doors open to an amazing world of science and art that is sure to thrill the senses of visitors of all ages. The National Museum just keeps getting better and better!"

Simon Chaplin, Director of Culture and Society at Wellcome said: "Scotland has been and remains a global leader in medicine and bioscience, and Wellcome is proud to support the new galleries at the National Museum of Scotland which reflect this history of world-class research and innovation."

Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs, Fiona Hyslop, said: "The opening of the ten new state-of-the-art galleries will significantly enhance the visitor experience for people of all ages. The National Museum of Scotland is undoubtedly one of the jewels in Scotland's cultural crown, welcoming over 8.5 million visitors since its reopening in 2011, making it the most visited museum outside of London for the past five years.

"The Scottish Government has contributed £900,000 towards this project. The funding has helped to bring these magnificent decorative art, design, fashion science and technology collections to life, and I'm confident they'll be enjoyed by many."

This £14.1m project is supported by HLF, Wellcome and the Scottish Government, as well as other major trusts, foundations and nearly 800 generous individual donors.

HLF has recently announced its initial support for the next and final phase of the Museum's Masterplan, with an award of a First Round Pass for a grant of £950,000. This £3m project will enable a further two new galleries to open in 2018, showcasing internationally important Ancient Egypt and East Asian collections.

Notes to Editors

National Museums Scotland

National Museums Scotland looks after museum collections of national and international importance and provides loans in Scotland and internationally, works with universities and other partners, and undertakes research into its collections. Their four individual museums are the National Museum of Scotland, the National Museum of Flight, the National Museum of Rural Life and the National War Museum. The National Museums Collection Centre in Edinburgh houses conservation and research facilities as well as collections not currently on display. Read more on the [National Museums Scotland website](#).

National Museum of Scotland

The National Museum of Scotland reopened in summer 2011 following a three-year, £50m redevelopment. With over 8m visitors since reopening, the National Museum of Scotland has been the most popular museum in the country outside of London for the past five years in the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions' league table.

This phase of the Masterplan has been funded with £7m from private sources, alongside HLF (£4.85m), Wellcome (£1.3m) and the Scottish Government (£900,000).

Wellcome

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Further information

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