

Scotland 2017 - May 22nd to 26th

May 22nd.

Monday: Everyone assembled in good time and we set off for Peterborough. The Great Northern hotel had coffee and cakes ready and it was a good opportunity to say hello to everyone.

On arrival in Edinburgh we were met by Mike our guide. Mike was our guide for the week, but not a tour manager, a role I realised I would be taking!

May 23rd.

Tuesday: We left at 9am for Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, This is a magnificent museum in a remarkable building. There is an eclectic mix of art, natural history, sculpture, heritage objects and much more.

After lunch it was on to Hill House. Sitting above the Clyde, it is considered to be one of Charles Rennie Mackintosh's finest domestic creations. It was decorated with the help of his wife, Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh. This was a very interesting house, seeing the total décor in Mackintosh's own style, pale colours and stencils, furniture and light fittings, wall coverings all complementing each other. The exceptions were where Blackie the publisher who commissioned the house had introduced his own furniture. One can only imagine the designer's thoughts on seeing heavy furniture disturbing his décor.

The bedroom was in Mackintosh style and it had a most peaceful atmosphere. A great place to visit.

In the evening Dr. Evelyn Silber gave an interesting lecture about Glasgow's architecture.

24th May.

Wednesday: A visit to the Royal Yacht Britannia. This was really an eye opener. The luxury of the royal apartments on deck compared to those of the crew. The ratings were in very cramped spaces and it must have been hard to keep their uniforms as smart as they were expected to be. The sailors didn't wear their hats when working near the royals. This was so members of the royal family didn't have to keep returning

salutes. The dining room was truly magnificent. A worthwhile visit.

Free time in Edinburgh, some of the group opted for a panoramic coach tour. We had a lecture this evening about Glasgow artists.

On the way back to the hotel we had an opportunity to stop and view the magnificent Kelpies, two horse sculptures that tower above the road, placed in a former brownfield site, transformed into a pleasant recreational area, where people can stroll around.

25th May

Thursday: An excellent day, first a visit to St. Mungo's Cathedral, which had some impressive stained glass windows, then onto the Hunterian Gallery, this Gallery had an impressive collection of paintings and was well worth visiting. While there we went into the Mackintosh House, which was a reconstruction of the original Glasgow home of the architect. He took a typical Victorian end of terrace house which apart from the front door appeared like the other houses, and transformed the inside to his own vision, distinctive designs, simplicity, light and airy. The furniture was painted white and on several pieces his wife had added her own designs.

After that we went to The House for an Art Lover. This was inspired by Mackintosh's competition entry of 1901. The plans were transformed into reality by contemporary artists and the house was magnificent. It was situated in beautiful grounds and the sunny weather enhanced the entire experience. We also had a delightful cream tea which helped!

26th May

Friday: Our last day and we were all rather sad. We spent the morning at the National Gallery of Scotland, a wide selection of paintings so something to suit everyone.

Then homeward bound, arriving back in Welwyn Garden City exactly on schedule.