

# NEWS

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## Gallery Redevelopment

**Work has begun on our major redevelopment of Aberdeen Art Gallery, Cowdray Hall and the Remembrance Hall, with the complex of buildings due to reopen in Winter 2017.**

Much has happened behind closed doors since the beginning of 2015. During the first few months of the year staff and contractors worked all hours available to carefully pack and transport the art collection out of the Art Gallery and into special storage.

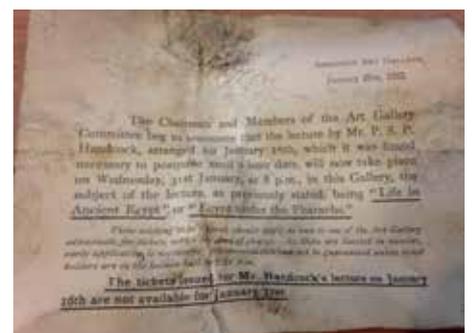
Between January and April, over 2000 works of art were taken off the walls and out of the hidden storage areas of the Art Gallery, checked over, packed by art handling experts, loaded into high security vehicles and taken to a safe, secure and temperature controlled storage facility. Once empty, we marked the closure with a hugely well-attended final weekend of events including writing "good bye" messages on the walls of the empty building, football in the Gallery and a public ceilidh, finally everyone was piped out of the Gallery before locking the doors.

The building was handed over to the building contractors, McLaughlin & Harvey, and with structural and recording surveys undertaken, the strip-out and salvage

process began in earnest in June. The granite columns and marble floors have been protected in situ. Other materials are being re-used or recycled wherever possible. Original features, once obscured, have been uncovered and we are beginning to see how the building has been constructed over the past 130 years.

There have been some surprises, such as evidence of the first building not only being the structure facing Schoolhill, but having an extra one-storey wing running at right angles from the right hand end, back into Robert Gordon College's courtyard. This was adapted and extended, with an additional floor being added as the Gallery was changed in 1905. The building contractors have also been discovering one or two discarded items left by previous workers, such as a box of matches which cost 1½p; Corona soft drink can; leaflets and invitations for special exhibitions and graffiti... all of which will be recorded with the history of the development.

The next phase will include the erection of scaffolding at the front of the building, and eventually the removal of the roof above the centre court, followed by the installation of a crane to begin the repair and construction work.





## Development of the New Galleries

Working with Studioarc interpretation design contractors, we are in the final stages of designing all of the new galleries that will display the city's collection. These will include galleries dedicated to portraiture, the shoreline, the influence of Impressionism, links between Queen Victoria and the art of Scotland, abstract art and colourful craft collections as well as introductions to the collections (contemporary and historic) and to art in general.

The Remembrance Hall will become a much more accessible space with a re-designed balcony and the reinstatement of all four original openings, connecting the Cowdray Hall with the Art Gallery. We plan to use this space to remember the fallen through art, music and poetry.

The Cowdray Hall will become a lively space that will be used for a wide variety of functions whilst keeping music at its core. We are also developing a unique app, available to all who visit the Art Gallery, the visitor to listen to specially selected playlists related to each gallery.



## Staff and Volunteers Activities

During the Redevelopment process we have been committed to ensuring that the needs of all Staff and Volunteers currently working within Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums have been catered for. Staff at all levels have participated in Change Management workshops and have demonstrated just how flexible they are whilst the major pack-up of the Gallery took place.

Staff have now moved to a number of new work locations including Collection stores, the Central Library, Marischal College and the Maritime Museum. We continue to run a busy programme of exhibitions and events at the Maritime and Tolbooth Museums, at other city and shire venues and the teams are working on a number of loans to other galleries at home and abroad. The closure of the Gallery has

allowed us to focus on a number of new training opportunities. These include five secondment opportunities of 6 months duration, created to allow staff members to experience particular projects related to their own fields of expertise. Most recently staff introduced and piloted a series of conducted tours for visitors at the Maritime Museum. These have been a great success and now take place every Saturday and Sunday - and are free.

All the Front of House team of Museum Assistants, Administration Team and Café and Retail Staff are attending Customer Service sessions, including the nationally acclaimed 'World Host' workshops, so that our levels of Customer Service are exemplary.

## Inspire Us

INSPIRE US is an Inspiring Art and Music project. We'd like you to take one of our chosen artworks and re-imagine it. This can be done digitally, including animation or you can print the image then use various mediums including paint, inks, coloured pencils etc to change it. **Be as creative as you want to be!** Find out more at [www.aagm.co.uk](http://www.aagm.co.uk)

## Guided Tours

The Aberdeen Maritime Museum guided tours programme continues to go from strength to strength with 367 visitors having taken tours to date. The current staff guides are soon to be joined by four volunteers who are busy researching and preparing their own interpretation of the museum.

Interested in becoming a tour guide? Please contact Ethel Stewart - [EtStewart@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:EtStewart@aberdeencity.gov.uk)

## Development Trust

A passionate group of supporters from the business and arts communities in the North East have come together to set-up Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums Development Trust, a Registered Charity (SCIO No. SC045363), to help raise funds in support of Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums. The Inspiring Art and Music campaign is the focus of their initial efforts, and they're keen to ensure that everyone in the North East can be involved in bringing the rejuvenated Art Gallery and Cowdray Hall to life.

You can now donate to Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums Development Trust by text. Simply text **AAGM001** to **70970** to donate £5 now or visit our website **www.aagm.co.uk**

*Image: Steve Regulski, chair of Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums Development Trust, left with George Adam, the Lord Provost of Aberdeen*



## Collections at Home and Abroad

During the period of Gallery building work we look forward to welcoming visitors to a programme of art and music at our two museum venues, The Tolbooth Museum and Aberdeen Maritime Museum and Lunchbreak Concerts at Aberdeen Citadel. There is also an opportunity to see the City's collections at other venues in the city and shire and whilst on loan to other galleries in the UK and abroad.

### DRUM CASTLE

Until 31 March 2017

#### HUMAN PRESENCE

Selected from the Gallery's Fine Art collection, this exhibition explores how artists capture a human presence, where their approach may be aesthetic, witty, playful, or sinister. Mid and late 20th century figurative painting and contemporary installation works are placed in a new context in the remarkable, historic setting of Drum Castle.

### STANLEY SPENCER GALLERY,

COOKHAM, BERKSHIRE

Until 20 March 2016

#### THE CREATIVE GENIUS OF STANLEY SPENCER

The Stanley Spencer Gallery has borrowed all Aberdeen Art Gallery's Spencer works. Notable paintings, such as *Southwold* and *Crucifixion*, will be displayed in Cookham, the village where he lived and which features in many of his works.

### TOWNER ART GALLERY, EASTBOURNE

12 September 2015 - 24 January 2016

#### NORTH TO SOUTH

This exhibition, drawn from Aberdeen's collections, complements pieces from the Towner's own permanent collection. It includes paintings of the South coast of England, such as Steer's *Eastbourne* and Bevan's *Ploughing on the Downs*, as well as views of Aberdeen by Nasmyth.

### THE FLEMING COLLECTION, LONDON

Until 27 January 2016

#### NORTHERN LIGHTS

The Fleming Collection hosts an exhibition of paintings with a Scottish connection selected from Aberdeen's holdings. The display includes examples from the outstanding collection of 18th and 19th century portraits, the Aberdonian artists, Phillip and Dyce, and brings us up to the present time with an audio visual work by Rachel Maclean, concerning Scottish identity.

### DRENTS MUSEUM, ASSEN, NETHERLANDS

20 September 2015 - 7 February 2016

#### THE GLASGOW BOYS - PIONEERS OF SCOTTISH PAINTING

In September, a large group of paintings by the Glasgow Boys went on display in Drents, which explores the connections between Dutch and Scottish artists in the 19th century. This loan includes Gallery favourites, *The Tennis Party* and *To Pastures New*.

### AROS, KUNSTMUSEUM,

AARHUS, DENMARK

9 October 2015 - 10 January 2016

#### MONET - LOST IN TRANSLATION

Aberdeen Art Gallery is lending a key French Impressionist work, *La Falaise à Fécamp* by Monet to the inaugural exhibition at AROs, the new art museum at Aarhus, Denmark.

## Museums Collections Centre

A new storage centre in Northfield to house Aberdeen's art and history collections, currently known as the Museums Collections Centre, is rapidly rising from the ground. It is on target for construction to be completed by the end of this year. There's then a busy period of a few months when the collections will be moved in. The site will be a focal point for increasing opportunities to engage with arts and culture, and it will be a venue in its own right, for the community, city and wider region.

The centre is being built as an 'open store'. This means that people will be able to come and see the treasures that we don't have space to display in our city centre venues. We haven't decided yet what our opening hours will be, but we will have a combination of sessions when people can just pop-in to have a look around and days when people can make an appointment to visit. We will also have a learning space where we will be running classes, workshops and events, as well as welcoming school groups.

Our Collections access team are busy preparing for moving to the site, making sure that we have all the required resources and correct procedures in place to ensure a safe, secure and efficient move to the centre. We're also finding out about what visitors want to see and do in the new building. Members of the Museums and Galleries team have met with several schools and community groups, increasing awareness of the centre and its strong potential for engagement opportunities.

We are currently holding a naming competition for the building. Classes in local schools have been invited to choose a name they would like us to use. A specially selected panel of judges will then pick a top ten out of all the submissions and afterwards invite the public to vote on the short list. The building will be known by the name with the most votes!



## Guthrie on the Go

Our newest recruit to Museums and Galleries is a Goose named 'Guthrie' and he is fascinated by the works that are going on. He has been spotted out and about in Aberdeen in various locations, even attending 'World Host' Training! He also visited our Collections stores to observe the pack-up of art works going out on loan to London and overseas for exhibitions showcasing Aberdeen's art collections.

Guthrie will shortly have his own Facebook page and he'll continue to travel around, keeping his beady little eyes on progress and he'll report in a way that will appeal to our younger Visitors. This photograph shows him reading about his namesake, the artist, Sir James Guthrie, who painted the work, 'To Pastures New' - one of the city's most popular paintings.

## Want to find out more?

Visit [www.aagm.co.uk](http://www.aagm.co.uk) or our Tumblr site dedicated to the redevelopment: [inspiringartandmusic.tumblr.com](http://inspiringartandmusic.tumblr.com), which will be regularly updated with blogs throughout the closure period. This site also explores FAQs and provides details on how you can give feedback and comments to the Project Team.

You can also follow us on:  
**Facebook:** AAGandM  
**Twitter:** @AbdnArtMuseums

This painting is currently on display in 'The Glasgow Boys - Pioneers of Scottish Painting' at the Drents Museum, The Netherlands until 7 February 2016.