

National Museums Scotland

History's at the heart of 2010 with an exciting line up of new exhibitions at Scotland's five National Museums.

The Lewis Chessmen, the 200th anniversary of the completion of the Bell Rock Lighthouse and the women of the Land Army and Timber Corps are just a few of the highlights of National Museums Scotland's 2010 exhibition programme.

The year began with Meet Your Maker, opening on 29 January at the National Museum of Scotland and a great opportunity to view the works and practice of nine of Scotland's leading makers. Working in situ, the makers provide a fantastic insight into the processes behind the craft. Some pieces will also be available to purchase.

Dr Gordon Rintoul, Director, National Museums Scotland said:- 'National Museums Scotland enters a new decade with a strong programme including a landmark tour of the Lewis Chessmen in collaboration with the British Museum. The exhibitions across our five museums highlight the diversity of our collections from the best of Scottish contemporary craft to the development of lighthouse technology and the key role played by Scots within this. Building on last year's success at the National Museum of Flight, which saw a 25% increase in visitor numbers, we will be opening further new displays in the Spring.'

On 26 February, an exhibition at the National War Museum, honouring the Women's Land Army and their crucial work during the Second World War opened. The exhibition focuses on the diverse real life experiences of women who helped keep the country on its feet.



The Jet Age, the new permanent exhibition focussing on a Boeing 707 cabin opens to the public at the National Museum of Flight on 1 April. This exhibition features the reminiscences

of former cabin crew and passengers from the heyday of commercial travel. Visitors can revel in the glory of 1960s air travel, when photographing celebrities at the airport was still a novelty! In addition, another historic building, the Parachute Store, will be atmospherically restored to its original state. This building was where a team of women worked to check and safely pack the parachutes which were so essential to the aircrew stationed at East Fortune Airfield.

For romantics, the National Museum of Costume presents a new exhibition of wedding dresses from television and film, open since 9 April. Gowns worn by Joely Richardson, Helena Bonham-Carter and Meryl Streep feature alongside a glittering array of wedding accessories.

On 21 May, the National Museum of Scotland opens an exhibition of 30 Lewis Chessmen from the collections of National Museums Scotland and the British Museum. The exhibition will explore the enduring mystery and intrigue of these intriguing characters by drawing on significant new research undertaken by Dr David Caldwell, National Museums Scotland. This major exhibition will tour to the Aberdeen Art Gallery, the Shetland Museum and Archives and Museum nan Eilean in Stornoway.

1 February 2011 marks the 200th anniversary of the completion and lighting of the Bell Rock Lighthouse, which took four years to complete. This fantastic feat of engineering by Robert Stevenson will be celebrated as the central part of an exhibition at the National Museum of Scotland opening in October 2010. It highlights the personal stories of the people who designed, built and operated lighthouses in such treacherous conditions. Displays will chart the role of lighthouses and the key role played by Scots in the development of this technology.

As the redevelopment of the Royal Museum building continues apace, Treasured showcases the wonder and diversity of the nation's world class collections, casting fresh light on some of the best-loved from the Royal Museum displays. Spanning 500

million years, with objects from all five continents, view insects in amber, samurai swords and Martian meteorite at the National Museum of Scotland.

Over and above exhibitions, National Museums Scotland runs a packed schedule of events and activities across all sites, from workshops, live interpretation events and school visits to major days out such as the National Museum of Flight's Airshow, which will take place on 24 July 2010.