AUDIO – Some of the highlights at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery

The Scottish National Portrait Gallery reopened at the beginning of December 2011 after two years of extensive renovations. The whole project has incorporated both internal and external works, and the public floorspace has been increased by about 60 per cent. The building dates from the 1880s and was designed by Sir Robert Rowand Anderson to show off the nation's people. There is a huge array of portraits, but curiously the new exhibitions include some landscapes too where the curators have thought it necessary to portray Scotland and the Scots relationship to it. Photography has a firm place in the gallery now and you will no doubt love the Hot Scots exhibition which is on the left as you enter the main door, featuring photographs of David Tennant and Robert Carlyle, as well as artist John Byrne, a well-kent face about Edinburgh.

One of the most striking features is that the top floor interlinking galleries are now lit by skylights and form a wonderfully inviting airy space. An innovative plan has been to put screens in front of windows where daylight might otherwise damage some of the works displayed, but these can be easily removed for future exhibitions.

Another is the 48 person lift which will whisk you to the top floor. The cafe on the ground floor is busy, even at 10 o'clock in the morning when the gallery first opens. The whole atmosphere is one of renewed interest in all things Scottish, and the renovation has done much to make the space much more

inviting to the public.

 Just before the gallery reopened, The Reporter spoke with two of the curators, David Taylor and Imogen Booth to bring you just a small flavour of what is there waiting for you on your visit.

[Scottish National Portrait Gallery reopening 1 December 2011 (mp3)](#)

Scottish National Portrait Gallery 1 Queen Street, Edinburgh, EH2 1JD

pginfo@nationalgalleries.org

Open daily 10am to 5pm and until 7pm on Thursdays