

Spotting Bowerbird

Bruntsfield's

Are you in need of eco-friendly interiors inspiration or advice? Perhaps you could do with some (remarkably affordable) vintage clothing?

Or a truly original present for a friend? If so, I'd make a beeline for Bowerbird Antiques. You'll find it nestled in a quiet spot just opposite Bruntsfield Primary School.

Bowerbird bravely opened its doors in late April 2021 truly mid-pandemic. As co-owner Raine DuPuy explained: "It was an act of faith. We thought "Bowerbird" was a catchy name that describes something of our ethos in that we, like them, lay out an eclectic array of items and art in order to attract others in."

Indeed, where else in Edinburgh could one expect to find such an eclectic mix of antique and vintage furniture, original art, limited edition prints, Scottish glass, textiles (including vintage liberty 70s and 80s fabric), tools and curios?

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Anglo-Indian boxes c.1870-1880

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1960s/70s Scottish Caithness glass

A word of warning though: a visit to Bowerbird is a risky

affair. (Few leave empty-handed.) But it's also an education. On my first visit I discover (and learn about) stunning Anglo-Indian boxes (pictured), Indian juggling clubs (see below) and... spirit levels. Do you know what they do? (Nothing to do with alcohol!) I was also introduced to 1960s Caithness glass (also pictured) which is, apparently, very much in vogue.

This is not your average antique shop. It's colourful, bright and airy, not dingy and dank. And the owners are exceptionally helpful and generous with their knowledge and expertise. What's more, the goods on sale – dating from the late 18th century – are all beautifully arranged. After all, real style is, arguably, about being able to juxtapose eras successfully. And Bowerbird demonstrates how to do this in a way that is environmentally friendly.

At the heart of Bowerbird's ethos is a commitment to sustainability. For Raine, "buying good quality antiques and vintage is the ultimate in 'going green'". After all, when we decorate our homes with used objects, we have zero impact on the world's resources. This is also a way of celebrating traditional skills and craft that have often been lost.



Upstairs interior of Bowerbird Antiques

The owners

Before returning to Edinburgh in 2019, David, aka 'Mr Fix It,' was a Doctor of Botany and Orchid specialist at Kew Gardens, London. Raine is an artist who makes Byzantine-inspired icons to raise awareness of endangered and persecuted species.



Exterior with gold leaf lettering by sign writer Thomas Paine