

Museums, Galleries and Tourism  
Realising the True Impact

SCOTTISH  
MUSEUMS  
COUNCIL



# Realising the True Impact

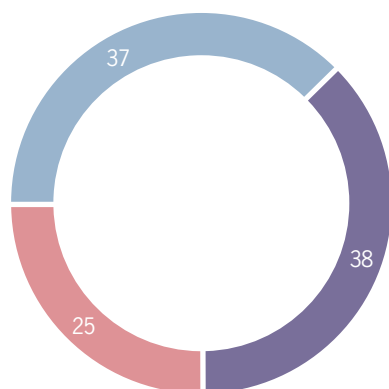
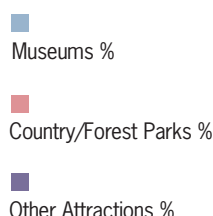
of Museums and Galleries in Scottish Tourism:  
The Key Findings

Here we are  
at Mary Queen  
of Scots House x



# The Facts & Figures

Scottish Museum  
Share of Visits 2003

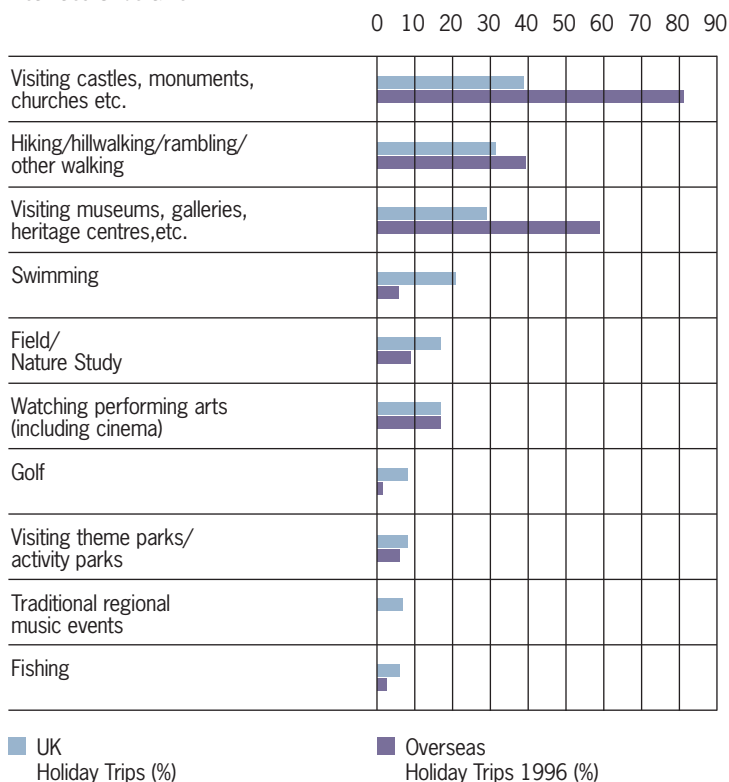


## More people visit museums than any other type of tourist attraction in Scotland.

Tourism is vital to the Scottish economy (in 2002, tourism supported around 9% of all employment and in 2003 over 18 million tourists took overnight trips to Scotland). *Realising the True Impact of Museums and Galleries in Scottish Tourism* demonstrates that museums and galleries are central to the Scottish tourism product and the industry's continuing success:

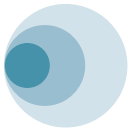
- In 2003 museums accounted for 44% of visitor attractions
- Museums account for 37% of visits to attractions (see above pie chart)
- Visiting museums and heritage is consistently among the top 3 activities undertaken by tourists. For overseas tourists and tourists visiting Scotland for at least one overnight stay, visiting museums, galleries and heritage centres is the second most popular activity. Domestic tourists record visiting museums as their third most popular activity (see above table)

Activities Undertaken



- Castles, monuments and churches were the most popular activities recorded by both local and overseas visitors. It is important to highlight that some castles and churches, such as Stirling and Edinburgh castle, contain museum collections.
- In addition, it was estimated that 20% (approximately 820,000 adults) of Scotland's adult population (approximately 4.1 million) visited museums in 2002/03.
- The Scottish independent museums sector realises the highest number of museums per capita in the UK.
- Scotland's national museums and galleries also contribute significantly to the Scottish tourism product, appearing in the top three most visited free admission museums, with 686,531 visitors to the Royal Museum and the Museum of Scotland and 434,429 to the National Gallery of Scotland in 2003 respectively. As this report goes to print, it has also been announced in the 2004 VAM figures that visitor figures at the National Gallery of Scotland increased by 78% between 2003 and 2004, making it the most visited free attraction in Scotland.





Museums also play a vital role in the tourism economy on a regional level:

Museums account for more than 50% of all attractions in the following four regions:

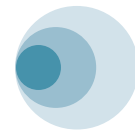
- Greater Glasgow 69%, Western Isles 64%, Fife 63%, and Angus & City of Dundee at 57%.

Museums account for a greater market share of visits in the following regions:

- Museums in Edinburgh and Lothian represent almost 48% of all attractions and secure 55% of total visits to the region
- Museums in Ayrshire and Arran represent only 37% of all attractions but secure more than 53% of visits to the region
- Museums in Shetland represent 27% of attractions and secure almost 40% of total visits to the region
- Museums in the Western Isles represent 64% of all attractions and secure more than 71% of total visits to the region
- Museums in Angus and City of Dundee represent 57% of all attractions and secure almost 60% of visits to the region

*Escaping from  
Inveraray Jail x*

# The Bigger Picture



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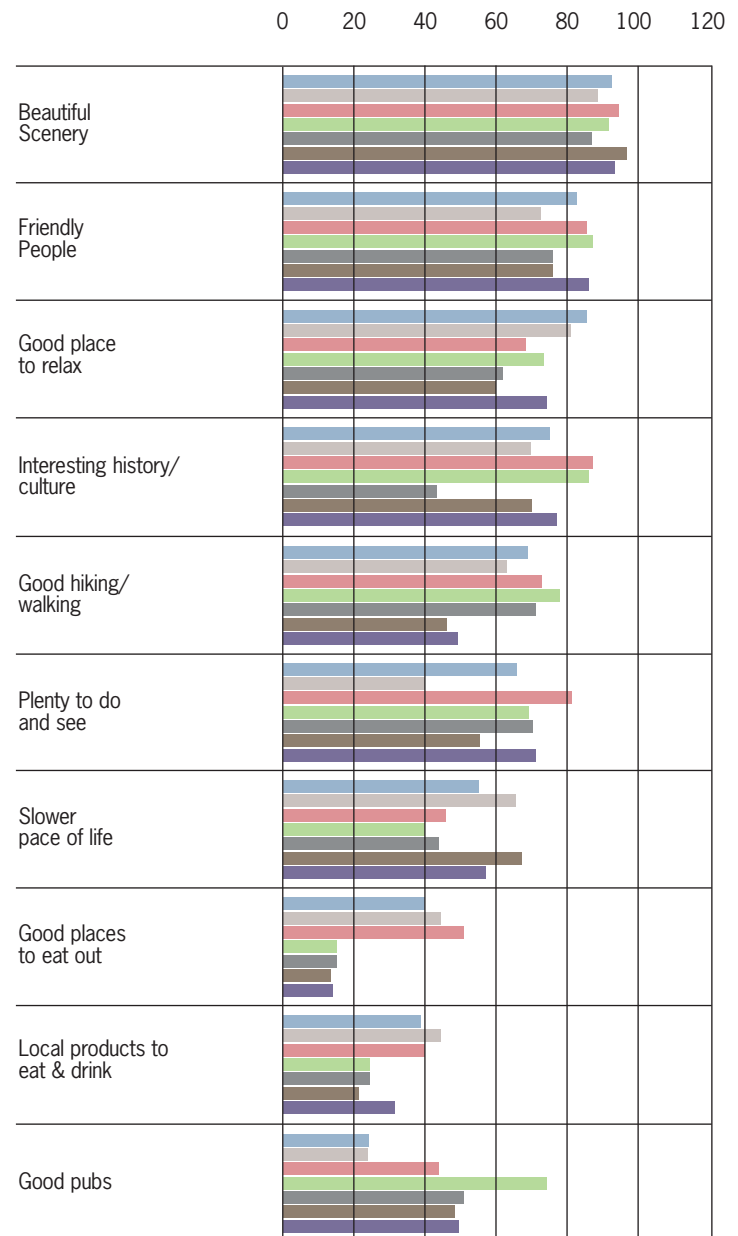
“Tourists’ perceptions of Scotland and their interest in cultural heritage demonstrate the importance they place on the Scottish landscape, built heritage and culture.” (VisitScotland 2003)

Statistics outlined in *Realising the True Impact of Museums and Galleries in Scottish Tourism* demonstrate that tourists are heavily interested in Scotland’s history and culture and that it is a central part of the tourist experience. Over 70% of the vast majority of inbound visitors reported an interest in Scottish heritage and culture (see opposite table).

The contribution Museums and Galleries make to Scotland’s tourism product is twofold: in addition to being key visitor attractions, they are also gatekeepers to the country’s cultural history and built heritage landscape. Scotland has experienced centuries of migration and emigration from the Highlands and Islands to destinations within the nation and across the globe. Nearly 10 million people in America claim Scottish heritage, making them the eighth largest ethnic group in the country (MacMillan 2005). Museums have the potential to harness significant international links such as Scottish-North American links through international organisations like the American-Scottish Foundation in New York.

There are also a range of niche markets that depend on museum involvement, such as ancestral and event tourism. The internationalisation of Scottish culture is reflected in a worldwide interest in the achievements and events that celebrate the life and work of cultural ambassadors like Robert Burns, Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Scott of the Antarctic. As the gatekeepers to Scotland’s history, museums play a vital role in maximising the tourism opportunities that lie within these markets.

Attitudes towards Scotland as a destination



Key

English

Scottish

American

German

French

Italian

Spanish

# Museums as National Icons

## Marketing, Culture and National Identity

**Tourism marketing in Scotland is heavily reliant upon the imagery of museums as key iconic buildings in the representation of destinations.**

As a key element in the iconic representation of Scotland and its people, images of museums and galleries play a vital role in developing Scotland as a 'must visit' destination for visitors and tourists.

However, the role of museum iconography in marketing is as yet underplayed at an organisational, local, regional and national level. This suggests that investment in marketing needs to be tackled at various levels to be collectively supportive. At a grass roots level museums/museum services that lack resources, e.g. have no marketing budget, or lack specific expertise are disadvantaged, regardless of their performance as a visitor attraction.

It is clear in any examination of international destination marketing campaigns that the cultural heritage – including heritage landscapes and buildings – is a central marketing icon. Museums and galleries could play a significantly greater role in establishing a unique Scottish place image, which would lead to favourable differentiation from competitors.

Museum architecture plays a role in defining the landscape and establishing the country's unique identity. Museums and galleries are located within period buildings that range from grand civic buildings down to more modest dwellings, which often add considerably to the interpretation of the objects they contain. In particular, Scottish urban destinations benefit from iconic museum buildings when marketing themselves. Museums as heritage buildings are closely identified icons of many cities, acting as unique venues for meetings, functions, corporate hospitality and product launches. The iconic representation of Charles Rennie Mackintosh through architecture and museums and Robert Burns through built heritage are also critical in marketing Scotland.

From a tourism perspective Scotland's national identity can be expressed in a range of images related to landscape, art-forms, society, myth and legend. The preservation of the history of Scottish people, their lives and their work furthers the interpretation of national identity. Establishing a strong national identity can enrich Scotland's own cultural context for the benefit of its citizens and visitors. Museums have a significant opportunity to develop cultural interpretation of the immense wealth and variety that exists within collections across Scotland.



Viewing some  
Charles Rennie Mackintosh  
furniture X



# Case Studies



With the 'folk' at the  
Highland Folk Museum  
X

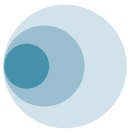
The following case studies provide examples of the differing but equally valuable roles that museums and galleries across Scotland play in tourism:

## SV Glenlee and RRS Discovery

- The SV Glenlee and RRS Discovery are both berthed near where they were originally launched from the River Clyde in 1896 and the River Tay in 1901 respectively. These artefacts tell different stories about people and interpret Scotland's role in world trade, travel, exploration and discovery. For local people and tourists this provides a package of experiences that further interpret Scotland's 'national identity'.

## The Highland Folk Museum

- The Highland Folk Museum based in Kingussie and Newtonmore recreates 400 years of Highland clan and croft heritage by reconstructing the buildings and village life in an appropriate rural setting. As well as landscape and buildings, people dressed in period costume add to the interpretation theme of its major collections of furniture, machinery and implements connected with the 18th to 20th century Highland countryside.



On the deck,  
Royal Yacht Britannia  
X

### Glasgow Museums

- The Regeneration of Period Architecture outside and within Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum has involved stripping away cladding to reveal internal Victorian architecture and updating facilities which do not meet current visitor expectations.
- The proposed New Riverside museum will contribute to the much wider riverside programme to regenerate the River Clyde. The new museum is set to relocate and add to the existing collection and interpretation of the Museum of Transport, currently located at Kelvin Hall. The architecture will have a significant impact on the riverside landscape and the iconic representation of Glasgow in tourism terms.
- Scotland is renowned as a nation with a strong element of cultural diversity, the issue of which has been tackled robustly, particularly projects undertaken in Glasgow through the city's Open Museum. Glasgow has also led the way on several temporary exhibitions such as GOMAs Sanctuary Project which looked at issues affecting asylum seekers and refugees.

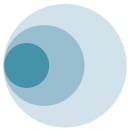
GOMA also did some groundbreaking work with their Nu exhibition interpreting contemporary youth culture through portrait and video arts, which pay tribute to the Goth culture.

### Regimental Museums

- The Royal Scots and the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders Regimental Museums are both located within the fortifications of Edinburgh Castle and Stirling Castle which both sit on the crown of extinct volcanic rocks. These locations enhance the museums' respective military themes and the interpretation of phases of military history.

More importantly, as they are hosted by two of the most visited paid admission tourist attraction in Scotland, these free admission museums realise significant marketing benefits.





**Museums, Galleries and Tourism**  
*Realising the True Impact*

## Considerations

This report recognises, for the first time, that museums and galleries are a key cultural resource that lies at the heart of visitor experiences throughout Scotland.

Of critical importance is the financial instability experienced within the sector at a time when museums are expected to become more accountable to a wider section of the public as well as contribute significantly towards local economic priorities which include their role in tourism. In order to truly unlock the potential contribution they can make to Scotland's tourism economy, museums and galleries require investment in skills and marketing.



## The Tourists

The sculpture, 'Tourists' has been used with the kind permission of the Estate of Duane Hanson and the National Galleries of Scotland.

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A large print version of the text is available on request.

## Background

**The Scottish Museums Council commissioned the report *Realising the True Impact of Museums and Galleries in Scottish Tourism* to examine more thoroughly the contribution museums and galleries make to tourism and the cultural infrastructure of Scotland. Quantitative data used in this report is drawn primarily from information gathered for the 2003 Visitor Attraction Monitor (VAM) commissioned and prepared for VisitScotland.**

The definition of museums used in this report is in line with that used in the 2001 National Audit, which included as participants the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh and the National Trust for Scotland (the NTS has six organisations recognised as museums through the MLA registration and accreditation scheme). The range of venues included in this report includes those of the National Museums of Scotland, the National Galleries of Scotland and the many Local Authority and independent museums that supplied information to VAM 2003.

Scottish Museums Council (SMC) is the main channel for the Scottish Executive support to, and the member organisation for, non-national museums and galleries in Scotland. SMC provides strategic leadership and a range of services including grant aid, strategic and operational advice, information and training. SMC has 205 members, which manage 341 museums all over Scotland, including 162 Independent, 142 local authorities, seven regimental and 30 university museums.

*Realising the True Impact of Museums and Galleries in Scottish Tourism* was prepared by the Moffat Centre for Travel and Tourism Business Development, Glasgow Caledonian University, [www.moffatcentre.com](http://www.moffatcentre.com)

Download a full copy of *Realising the True Impact of Museums and Galleries in Scottish Tourism* at [www.scottishmuseums.org.uk](http://www.scottishmuseums.org.uk)

May 2005



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE