

Scotland



10 May 2024

Glasgow

Digging into the Auld Sod (Glasgow)

Tower of Power

The main building of the multi-campus University of Glasgow, an economic driver for the city and Scotland.



Tea time

Emily and Hank settle in for the traditional British custom at Mackintosh at The Willow Tea Rooms on Glasgow's Sauchiehall Street.

Digging into the Auld Sod (Glasgow)

SOURCES: Underlined words link to them.

A £20 paper banknote almost anywhere in the United Kingdom carries a portrait of the late Queen Elizabeth II. The Bank of England won't begin circulating banknotes with portraits of her son, King Charles III, until June 5.

The exception is in Scotland — for the usual reason: they're Scots — where Scottish banks issue £20 notes. They're worth the same as those from south of Hadrian's Wall and accepted throughout the U.K. but carry a portrait of the late Catherine Cranston of Glasgow, known by many as “Kate” or “Miss Cranston.”

Her presence — the only female other than QE2 to be so honored on £20 notes — explains as much about the last city we visited in Scotland as Scottish contrariness.

“The £20 note celebrates the contribution of [the] turn of the century entrepreneur who commissioned Charles Rennie Mackintosh to create [tea rooms], which offered women a place to socialise ‘unchaperoned’ by men,” says the above-linked article from the *Glasgow Times*. Early in the 20th Century, women were a growing presence in the office workforce in downtown Glasgow, and Cranston recognized their need to enjoy lunch where they would not be harassed or ostracized by guys in the pub. At her death, she gave two-thirds of her estate to help the city's poor.



Glasgow is the larger but less-heralded Scottish city than Edinburgh, 50 miles east, where we began our visit to the Auld Sod. For every ancient castle in Edinburgh, there's a glass skyscraper in Glasgow. For every winding medieval cowpath masquerading as an Edinburgh street, there's a straight thoroughfare in Glasgow's downtown grid-pattern with a bus stop bench.

Glasgow may lack the age-encrusted charm that American tourists love about European cities even though it's older than Edinburgh. But in many ways Glasgow has been an engine driving social, economic and scientific change that couldn't comfortably wear Old World clothes.

“It's kind of like San Francisco and LA (the older city). There's a rivalry. There's two big cities not that far away,” said my Scottish-American friend and journalist, Alison van Diggelen, whom I quoted in the second newsletter of this series. She's from Glasgow but has also lived in Edinburgh.

At the University of Glasgow, the fourth-oldest university in the English-speaking world, the engineering school bears the name of its former employee, James Watt, inventor of the steam engine, making him, by
— *Continued on next page*

Digging into the Auld Sod

(Glasgow)

— *Continued from previous page*

extension, father of Industrial Revolution. The natural science building bears the name of one-time professor Baron Kelvin (William Thomson), who determined the value of absolute zero (0° Kelvin / -459° Fahrenheit / -273° Celsius) and worked on the first transatlantic telegraph. The business school is named for another of its professors, Adam Smith, who created the study of economics as an academic discipline and is considered the father of capitalism.

Because — and as — these guys were reinventing the way the world works, Glasgow's shipbuilding industry was thriving on the River Clyde, where some of history's most famous ships were built: *Cutty Sark*, the fastest of the clipper ships that revolutionized the international tea trade; ocean liner *RMS Lusitania*, sunk by a German U-boat in World War I; *Queen Mary*, now moored in Long Beach, California, as a historic hotel; and the Cunard liners *Queen Elizabeth* and *Queen Elizabeth 2*.

Yet as modern as Glasgow appears on the surface, the social fabric stretches across Scotland's ancient religious chasm. The shipbuilding industry, which drew tens of thousands of immigrant workers from Catholic Ireland into Protestant Scotland, was a key contributing factor, another chapter in the back-and-forth migration of Irish and Scots as the availability of land and jobs shifted back and forth across the Irish Sea. It's thinly disguised in the entrance signs to gambling parlors and pubs: No Team Colours.

"If you're in the street, Jody, and someone says, 'What team do you support?' they're basically asking you what religion are you," Alison said in our talk.

Many Scottish football/soccer clubs were formed around groups sharing common occupations or backgrounds, especially religious groups. The combined fanaticisms of sports and religion — especially where the monarch is head of the state church — creates an especially virulent toxicity. Hours after the death of Elizabeth II two years ago, Dundee United, the Catholic soccer club in the small city of Dundee, played in Glasgow against the city's Protestant team, Rangers. During a moment of silence for the queen before the kick-off, Dundee fans began to boo and happily sing "Lizzie's in a box" until they were drowned out by Rangers fans singing "God Save the Queen."

Rangers (red and blue) and Celtic (green and white), Glasgow's Catholic team, are the focal point of this religious-sports schism for all of Scotland. It can be mean and violent. Together, the clubs are called the Old Firm, and over their 135 years as rivals, the Old Firm has won the Scottish league championship 109 times (Rangers 55, Celtic 54). The all-time series between the two teams is Rangers 169, Celtic 165, with 102 ties.

Since 1989, when former Celtic star Mo Johnston accepted a higher-paying contract from Rangers, it has been increasingly common to find Catholic players on Rangers' roster and Protestant players on Celtic's. But a Glasgow City Council study found that 74% of Celtic fans identify as Catholic compared to 10% Protestant. Rangers' fans self-identify as 65% Protestant and 2% Catholic. The teams have made some efforts to dampen sectarian hatred, but it risks destroying a key aspect of their fan support bases. Scotland's Catholic Cardinal and the moderator of the Church of Scotland have also attended Old Firm games together.

There's room on Scotland's £5, £10 and £50 banknotes for whomever finds a solution.



Expressionism

If not expression, then what is an artist attempting? And if this collection of expressions doesn't say "Welcome to our art gallery," then I have no idea what it's about.



Don't Think Twice, It's All Right

I couldn't stop myself from shooting this one.
Her T-shirt says "EVERYONE LOVES A CANADIAN Girl."

Notes on photos

SOURCES: Underlined words link to them.

TOWER OF POWER — The main building of the University of Glasgow, a public school, stands on one of its city campuses next to the wooded Kelvingrove Park on Glasgow's west side. It was created by a charter from Pope Nicholas V in 1451, the second Scottish university after St Andrews. Ranked as one of the world's top 100 universities, it has nearly 43,000 undergraduate and graduate students. A Scottish undergrad can expect to pay the equivalent of \$2,300 / year in tuition and fees. It's a bit more for English, Welsh and Northern Ireland students but still less than a tenth of what an international student would pay. The current chancellor is Dame Katherine Grainger, a Glaswegian with degrees from St Andrews, Glasgow and King's College in London. She is Britain's most decorated female Olympian, winning a gold medal in the 2012 London Olympics in rowing after winning silver medals in Sydney 2000, Athens 2004 and Beijing 2008 and then another silver in Rio de Janeiro 2016. She is also chair of UK Sport, a government agency formed to invest in all Olympic sports in the United Kingdom following the nation's single gold medal at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. She was chosen to present King Charles III with Scotland's new sword when he was presented with the Honours (crown jewels) of Scotland at his investiture as king of Scotland last year.

TEA TIME — The Mackintosh at The Willow Tea Rooms where we spent our last Scottish afternoon is now a landmark preserved by the National Trust for Scotland and a monument not only to Catherine Cranston but to Charles Rennie Mackintosh, the architect she hired to design the art nouveau tea rooms that spread throughout downtown.

EXPRESSIONISM — This work of floating heads in the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum has probably received more attention than any other work since it was installed in 2006. "Shetland" TV fans may recognize it from scenes when DI Jimmy Perez occasionally visits Glasgow to visit his stepdaughter Cassie, a student at the University of Glasgow. I'm sorry to say I could find nothing about the artist, Sophie Cave, except to note that several references to her say she is/was a Scot. Half of this museum, which charges no admission, is for art and called "Expression." The other half is a natural history museum called "Life."

DON'T THINK TWICE, IT'S ALL RIGHT — Nothing much more to say about this except the girl was not posing for anyone out of view in this image. She simply saw Elvis and was moved to pose.

RIVER KELVIN — The river is only 22 miles long, so its real significance is serving as the waterway around which Glasgow's excellent and beautiful city park is arranged and also bringing the word "kelvin" into local nomenclature, at which it was highly successful. In addition to the Kelvin scale of temperatures mentioned in the main story, local "kelvin-based" names include Kelvingrove, the name of the park and museum, Kelvinbridge, the name of a bridge and subway station in the area, the name of the university's physics and astronomy building and others. The word itself probably derives from an extinct Celtic word relating to water.



RIVER Kelvin

The river is a tributary of Glasgow's main stream, the River Clyde, which empties into the Irish Sea. The tower in the distance is the same building as the cover photo.