

Museums and Media

Museums

Aberdeen Art Gallery, School Hill, Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Scotland.

The Burrell Collection, Burrell Museum, Pollok Park. Glasgow, Strathclyde, Scotland. Richard Marks, Keeper of the Burrell Collection and Assistant Director of Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries.

National Gallery of Ireland. Merrion Square, Dublin 2, Ireland. Homan Potterton, Director; Adrian Le Harivel, Curator, 01-615133.

Crawford Municipal Art Gallery, Emmet Place, Cork, Ireland. Peter Murray, Curator, 021-273377.

Aberdeen, the most northerly of Scottish cities, if one discounts Inverness, has been known as the “Granite City” because of the distinctive stone used in many of the major buildings. Over the last 20 years, the phenomenon of North Sea oil has transformed Aberdeen into a thriving and relatively prosperous northern center of business.

The Aberdeen Art Gallery is open seven days a week and with free admission is located only a stone’s throw from the town center. In the summer of 1992, while the ground floor of the gallery hosted “Royal Residences of the Victorian Era” (watercolors from the Royal Library of Windsor Castle) the main floor featured an exhibition entitled “The Highland Game—Life on Scottish Sporting Estates.” This collection of black-and-white photographs is the work of Glyn Satterley. The photographs were taken over a 10-year period and they chronicle the tapestry of life, work, leisure and recreation that makes up the unique highland sporting estate. There are photographs of gamekeepers and “ghillies,” estate lodges and hunting, shooting and fishing seen in a variety of dramatic settings. Michael Wigan in an introduction to the exhibition catalog comments:

The munificence of sporting opportunity puts the Scottish Highlands into a separate category from most of Britain and Europe. The result is an indigenous population well-versed in country lore, the intricacies of natural variety, and familiar equally with rod and gun.

The exhibition gives a fascinating insight into, not just the nature and

function of "field sports," but also the interrelationship of employer and employee and the residual caste of the British class system. *The Highland Game—Life on Scottish Sporting Estates* is published in soft cover by Swan Hill Press, 101 Longden Road, Shrewbury, Shropshire SY 39BR, England at a cost of \$15. There are over 100 excellent quality black-and-white photographs by Glyn Satterley with the introduction by Michael Wigan. The exhibition will be touring British Museums until 1994 and the catalog is highly recommended as an adjunct to recent commentaries on Scottish sports history by Glen Jarvie and Nigel Tranter among others.

The City of Glasgow in 1944 received the Burrell Collection. They were in receipt of a vast collection (paintings, sculpture, tapestries, ceramics, stained glass, furniture, metalwork, silver, etc.) of objets d'art that reflected 80 years of continuous collecting. Sir William Burrell was wealthy and his interests, although primarily those of a traditional collector (he did not speculate and buy the avant garde), were certainly eclectic. At the age of 96 his Burrell Collection numbered over 8,000 items.

What makes browsing through the Burrell Collection of more than passing interest for the sport historian is the placement and art category in which the, albeit, handful of sporting items are located. For example, around three sides of the Courtyard of the gallery are reconstructions of the Dining Room, Hall and Drawing Room at Hutton Castle, Sir William Burrell's home near Berwick-on-Tweed. In the Drawing Room are two early sixteenth-century France-Flemish tapestries. In one, "a primitive form of golf or hockey is in progress" while the other depicts huntsmen chasing rabbits. Other artistic sporting cues can be found in the material culture of Greece—an oil jug "with a sealed musician playing a stringed instrument to an audience"; a champion vase—possibly Song Dynasty (A.D. 960–1279)—thought to be awarded in ancient China to winners of archery contests; an early fourteenth-century French mirror case with a young couple playing chess. A considerable number of the tapestries have an athletic component and one, "Hercules Initiating the Olympic Games," is linked with Charles the Bold taking part in a medieval tournament in 1451. Another tapestry, "The Flight of the Heron" is a powerfully executed study of falconry and includes items of early seventeenth century hawking equipment—a pouch, hoods, and a gauntlet and lure. Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472–1533)—"The Stag Hunt" is a recreation of an actual scene with Frederick the Wise of Saxony and the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I in attendance. Works by Jean-Baptiste Oudry (1696–1755) who was appointed as painter of the royal hunts for Louis XV; the concept of exercise in the outdoors via Eugene Boudin's (1824–98) "The Empress Eugenie on the Beach at Trouville." Edgar Degas (1834–1917)—a particular favorite of Burrell—with 20 pieces in the collection among them the ballet dancers in the celebrated "The Rehearsal" and "Jockeys in the Rain"; and finally the muscular beauty of Augusto Rodin (1840–1917) and his sculpture, "The Thinker."

The Burrell Collection is published by Harper Collins in association with Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries c/o Burrell Collection, Pollok Park. Glasgow, \$15.

The National Gallery of Ireland opened in Dublin in 1864 and a visitor could be easily overwhelmed by the size and the scale of the building. While the Aberdeen Art Gallery and the Burrell Collection lend themselves to an afternoon or morning stroll, to tour the National Gallery of Ireland is best done over two days. The catalog is essential reading but, again, with 5,000 items described and illustrated, the undertaking can be daunting. Although an appendix in the catalog says it covers “Mythological, Historical and Literary Subjects” the classification is of little help to the sport historian.

This observer noted some promising starting-off points. Richard Doyle (1824–83) and “The Hippodrome Grand Steeple Chase—1839”: Andre Dunoyer de Segonzac (1884–1974) and various of his sketchbooks on horse-racing themes; Michael A. Hayes (1820–77) and “Riding to Hounds”: R. Howis (nineteenth century) a variety of sketches and drawings with “ancient” athletic forms, for example, “The Borghese Gladiator”: William Orphan (1878–1931) and a self-portrait playing tennis at the Fitzwilliam Tennis Club. Dublin: Robert Pyke (twentieth century) and caricatures including Lord Killanin, former president of the I.O.C., and Paul Mac Sweeney. sporting editor of the *Irish Times*; and many of the paintings of Jack Butler Yeats (1871–1957)—see “A Four-Oared Currach,” “The Circus Chariot,” and “A Yacht on the Norfolk Broads.”

National Gallery of Ireland-Illustrated Catalogue, compiled by Adrian Le Harival, c/o National Gallery, Merrion Square, Dublin 2. Ireland. \$25.

Cork is Ireland’s second largest city after Dublin and the Crawford Municipal Art Gallery nestles snugly near to. but apart from. the Opera House, the Lee River and a major shopping hub. The Gallery incorporates the Cork Custom House built in 1724 and enjoys a considerable reputation as a place that encourages Irish art and artists. Peter Murray, the curator, points out that the gallery “maintains an average of over 20 visiting or special exhibitions a year.” Murray goes out of his way to stimulate a dialogue on the Crawford Collection and wrote to this reviewer with a full listing of exhibitions held at the Crawford Gallery from 1984 to 1991. Among these were several with a distinct sporting flavor. Paintings and drawings by Edith Somerville, the artist and writer (with Violet Martin) of the Irish R.M. books that frequently feature fox hunting and steeplechase jumping: a Barrie Cooke exhibition (see later his celebrated fish painting): “100 Best”—a 1990 exhibition of outstanding Irish press photographs with a section devoted to sports.

In the current Crawford collection there are a number of works that reflect leisure, recreation and athletic themes. For this reviewer, his favorite

five artists were Daniel MacLise (1806–1870), a bold oil entitled “The Falconer”; Jack B. Yeats (1871–1957) “Returning From the Bathe” and his vibrant boxing piece “The Small Ring”—very similar in tone and texture to the boxing paintings of the American artist George Bellows (1882–1925); Frank Bramley (1857–1915) and his scene of two seamstresses playing Dominoes—“Domino!”; Daniel MacDonald (1821–1853) and his “Bowling Match at Castlenary, Cloyne in 1847.” Peter Murray in his notes to this painting uses a number of historical primary sources on the evolution of bowling in Ireland, its connection with the weaving trade and its Irish name of “Long Bullets”: and finally there is Barrie Cooke (b. 1931) and his masterpiece “The Lough Derg Pike—1980.” Peter Murray outlines the background to the painting:

The *Limerick Chronicle* of 18 May 1862 recorded Mr. Patrick Sheehy and Mr. John Norton catching a gigantic pike near Derry Castle on Lough Derg. The fish, which took two hours to land, weighed over 90 pounds and was 5'8" in length. Over a century later, Barrie Cooke . . . decided to record this remarkable event in a painting which not only includes a representation of the giant pike, but also possesses a pradella panel with a nineteenth century fishing rod and reel.

Masterpieces from the Crawford Municipal Art Gallery published by the City of Cork Vocational Education Committee in 1992 can be had on request to Peter Murray, the Curator.

In a brief look at four Scottish-Irish art galleries it seems fitting to end as one began with pieces of diverse art devoted to chronicling the appeal of hunting and fishing. These activities have provided and continue to provide valuable insights into the social, cultural and economic interweave of life in certain Celtic communities.

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