14,000 images capturing Scottish life to go on



Print from the McKinnon collection, David Octavius Hill and Robert Adamson: Professor Miller's son, James Miller

An exceptional collection of historic photographs dating from the earliest days of photography and including over 600 works from pioneers such David Octavius Hill, Robert Adamson, James Ross (d.1878) and John Thomson are to be shared with the public at a major exhibition next year.

Thanks to players of the National Lottery, more than 14,000 images – capturing a century of life in Scotland and demonstrating the history of photography – have been acquired in a special collaboration between the National Library of Scotland and the National Galleries of Scotland.

The collection was put together by photography enthusiast Murray MacKinnon, who established a successful chain of film-processing stores in the 1980s. It includes family portraits, working life, street scenes, sporting pursuits, shops, trams, tenements, mountains and monuments. Until now, it was estimated to be the last great collection of Scottish photography still in private hands.

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Lucy Casot, Head of HLF in Scotland, said: “Taken in the pioneering days of photography, these historical images allow us to glimpse our ancestors going about their daily lives for the first time. Thanks to players of the National Lottery, this valuable resource has been secured for us all to enjoy. It’s a fascinating collection detailing what life was like and how that has shaped us as a nation.”

The photographs provide a visual record of physical, social and economic changes since the 1840s.

Capturing a century of life in Scotland and demonstrating the history of photography

Highlights include:

- Some of the finest work of Thomas Annan and his son, James Craig Annan including rare examples of their original albumen prints
- Fine examples of the work of Scotland’s successful commercial photographers including George Washington Wilson and James Valentine
- Portraits of Scottish regiments from the Crimean War by Roger Fenton (1819-1869)
- A series of albums and prints depicting life in the main towns and cities from the late 1800s and early 1900s
- Studies of farming and fishing communities in remote villages and hamlets
- Scenes of shipbuilding, railways, herring fishing, weaving, whisky distilling, dockyards, slate quarries and other working environments

A major exhibition of the MacKinnon collection will be held at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery next year, with touring exhibitions around the country to follow. The entire collection will also be digitised over the next three years and made available online.



Lovell Telescope at Jodrell Bank, Simon James

#HeritageTreasures - The winners are in!