

25 April 2024

NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND PUTS SPOTLIGHT ON HORNEL AND JAPAN AT BROUGHTON HOUSE

A new exhibition at Broughton House, Kirkcudbright, brings together the Japanese souvenirs and East Asian plants from the home of Scottish 'Glasgow Boy' artist E.A. Hornel.

Highlighting Japanese objects and images, all featuring plant imagery, from Hornel's collections, the exhibition, called *Plant Journeys, Stories of East Asian Plants in Hornel's Home and Garden*, then takes visitors outdoors, with a Plant Trail showing the same plants featured in their outdoor settings in the Edwardian garden. Plants highlighted in the exhibition and trail include bamboo, camellia, chrysanthemum, iris, lily, maple, magnolia, peony, prunus (including cherry and plum) and wisteria.

Hornel was fascinated by Japan and made two trips there, in 1893-4 and 1920-1, bringing back souvenirs such as photographs, ceramics, prints, a beautiful maple-leaf patterned kimono, lavishly illustrated plant catalogues, and woodblock-printed kimono pattern books.

As well as inspiring Hornel's painting, the trips and souvenirs seem to have influenced his design of the garden at Broughton House. Though Hornel himself did not refer to the garden as being a 'Japanese' garden, there are clear design influences, such as the use of these East Asian plants and a pond with stepping stones.

The exhibition at Broughton House is based on research conducted by Dr Minna Törmä, Senior Lecturer in History of Art at the University of Glasgow, who has also put together 'biographies' of the plants in the exhibition, showing their cultural meanings in East Asia, especially in Japan.

While being familiar features in British gardens, these plants were not native species, and the exhibition is also a reminder of their own origins and stories. For example, according to Dr Törmä, bamboo symbolised integrity in Japan, since it bends but does not break, and was therefore considered essential in scholars' gardens to symbolise their own scholarly integrity. And lilies were considered a symbol of harmony and friendship in China, while in Japan the sacred lily (*omoto*) represented continuity over generations.

Jennifer Melville, Project Leader, Facing Our Past at the National Trust for Scotland, who curated the exhibition, commented: "This exhibition helps visitors to connect the interior of E.A. Hornel's home and studio with what is found outdoors, rather than treating them as separate entities. In spotlighting Hornel's Japan souvenirs, we also wanted to celebrate and illustrate the diversity of the National Trust for Scotland's

amazing heritage collections and what they can tell us about the tastes, crazes, fashions and passions of former times. The influence of Japan on European culture was widespread in the late nineteenth century and beyond, seen in everything from the art of the Impressionists to garden design, and we're pleased to be able to show that in practice, in an Edwardian house and garden in Dumfries & Galloway.

"By offering our visitors fresh and engaging perspectives on the heritage that we care for and share – as we're doing here with the *Plant Journeys* exhibition – we're helping to deliver the engagement objectives in our charity's Nature, Beauty and Heritage for Everyone strategy, of providing access and enjoyment for everyone. We're grateful for the support of our members and supporters, who make it possible for our charity to organise exhibitions like this, and to research and explore the heritage in our care, as well as protecting and sharing it. We hope that the local community, members and anyone interested in the exhibition's themes of East Asian plants and their influence on art, culture and garden design, will enjoy Broughton House, its beautiful garden and its extraordinary collections this summer and beyond."

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Notes for Editors

Images available at: <https://www.flickr.com/gp/133918740@N04/C9R0H7v758>

Opening details

Plant Journeys, Stories of East Asian Plants in Hornel's Home and Garden runs at Broughton House until Thursday 31 October 2024. See opening times below.

Broughton House is open Thurs-Mon, 10.00-16.30, until 31 October 2024, when it closes for the winter. The garden is open daily, 10.00-16.00, and can be accessed by a side gate on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, with a donation box. National Trust for Scotland members enjoy free entry. For more details, go to [Broughton House & Garden | National Trust for Scotland \(nts.org.uk\)](#)

About E.A Hornel

Edward Atkinson Hornel (1864 – 1933) was a significant figure in the group of young radical painters known as the 'Glasgow Boys'. Although born in Australia, Hornel spent most of his life in Scotland.

Making two trips to Japan, almost 20 years apart, Hornel was strongly influenced by what he saw and experienced. Upon returning to Scotland after his first visit, in 1895 Hornel gave a lecture on Japan, detailing the country's love of nature.

He writes: "Nature to them is symbolism itself and associated with traditions handed down from remote periods. Flower follows flower – the whole earth rejoicing in a profusion of bloom ..." (Hornel, Lecture on Japan Given in Scotland, 9 February 1895).

For Hornel, his time in Japan irrevocably altered his career as an artist. By his second visit almost twenty years later, Hornel had become a successful commercial artist.

Hornel bought Broughton House in 1901, living in it with his sister, Elizabeth "Tizzy", until his death in 1933. Upon Tizzy's death in 1950, the house was maintained by the Broughton House Trust, before being taken over by the National Trust for Scotland in 1997.

About the National Trust for Scotland

Established in 1931, the National Trust for Scotland is Scotland's largest conservation charity and cares for, shares and speaks up for Scotland's magnificent heritage.

Over the last 90 years the Trust has pioneered public access to and shared ownership of some of the most magnificent buildings, collections and landscapes in Scotland. It cares for more than 100 sites, from ancient houses to battlefields, castles, mills, gardens, coastlines, islands, mountain ranges and the plants and animals which depend upon them.

In March 2022 the National Trust for Scotland launched *Nature, Beauty & Heritage for Everyone*, its ten-year strategy which sets out the ambitions of the charity over the coming decade. From speaking up for Scotland's heritage which doesn't have a voice, to improving the lives and wellbeing of people across the country, and responding to the climate and biodiversity crisis, the Trust will build on its work in recent years to grow its impact and conserve and restore more of Scotland's heritage, as it moves towards its centenary in 2031.

Scotland's largest membership organisation, the National Trust for Scotland relies on the support of its members and donors to carry out its important work.

For more information on the National Trust for Scotland visit www.nts.org.uk.

The National Trust for Scotland is a charity registered in Scotland, Charity Number SC 007410.