

Arts, Culture and Sport

Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh, Artist (1864 – 1933)



Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh was a naturally gifted and innovative Scottish artist whose design work was one of the defining features of the “Glasgow Style” during the 1890s. Skilled in a variety of media including watercolour, metalwork, embroidery and textiles, she is regarded as one of the most talented artists of early 20th Century Britain. Her marriage to Charles Rennie Mackintosh, arguably the best-known Scottish architect and designer, resulted in one of the greatest partnerships in art history. The pair worked on a number of projects, with Margaret’s input clearly seen in the interior design; Charles himself said that he owed much of his success to his wife.

Màiri Mhòr nan Òran, Poet (1821-1898)



Màiri Mhòr nan Òran was the most prolific of the 19th century Gaelic poets, a singer, and a campaigner for crofters’ rights, with a remarkable history. She was born in Skye. Her songs captured the hearts and minds of Gaels everywhere and gave voice to the cruelties of the clearances of the 19th Century and before. While working as a nurse to a rich family in Inverness, she was wrongly accused of theft and sentenced to 40 days’ imprisonment; she is quoted as saying that the shame she endured “brought to life my poetry.” Her songs gave a voice to the victims of oppression, and are still widely sung throughout the Gaidhealtachd.

Jean Redpath, Musician (1937-2014)



An internationally renowned folk singer, educator, and musician, Jean Redpath was for many the voice of Scots traditional song. Despite not having any formal training, her understanding led her to become a great ambassador for traditional Scottish music. In 1977, Royal Jubilee Year, she performed at a banquet at Edinburgh Castle for Queen Elizabeth II. From 1979 she was a lecturer at the University of Stirling, and she gave courses for ten years in Scottish Song at the Heritage of Scotland Summer School. In 1987 she was awarded an MBE for her services to music. Recognised with several honorary doctorates, she was inducted into the Scottish Traditional Music Hall of Fame in 2008.

Nancy Riach, Swimmer (1927-1947)



Champion swimmer Nancy Riach was an inspirational character, with a strong legacy, despite living a tragically short life. Energetic and spirited, the naturally talented swimmer held 28 Scottish and British swimming records by the time she was 17. At the age of 20 Nancy Riach contracted polio and tragically lost her life to the disease. Following her death, she was hailed as the finest swimmer that the British Empire had ever produced. She was one of only five women to appear in the first 50 Scottish athletes in the 2002 Scottish Sports Hall of Fame. The Nancy Riach Memorial Medal remains one of the most coveted annual awards in Scottish swimming.

Victoria Drummond, Engineer (1894-1978)



Victoria Drummond had a childhood fascination with marine engineering. Resilient in the face of prejudice, she achieved many career firsts - the first woman marine engineer in Britain, the first British woman to serve as a Merchant Navy Chief Engineer, the first woman to hold a Board of Trade Certificate as a ship's engineer (having been failed many times because she was a woman) and the first woman member of the Institute of Marine Engineers. As a result of her courage under fire at sea during World War II, she was awarded an MBE in 1941 and was the first woman to receive the Lloyd's War Medal for Bravery at Sea.

Chrystal Macmillan, Prominent Campaigner (1872-1937)



Chrystal Macmillan was a barrister, politician, suffragist, pacifist, and the first female science graduate from the University of Edinburgh - a towering figure and a pioneer in education and law. In 1908, she became the first woman to plead a case before the House of Lords. One of the founders of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, she has been widely recognised for her work as a peace campaigner. She also campaigned for the right of women to vote. The Chrystal Macmillan Building at the University of Edinburgh was named in her honour.

Dorothee Pullinger, Engineer (1894-1986)



An accomplished automobile engineer, racing car driver, entrepreneur and founding member of the Women's Engineering Society, Dorothee Pullinger was a pioneer and inspiration for women in the male-dominated field of engineering. During World War I, she was responsible for 7,000 women employed in manufacturing high explosive shells at Vickers, Barrow-in-Furness, and, at the age of 26, was awarded an MBE for her war work. Post war, as a director and manager of Galloway Motors, she was responsible for the design and commercialisation of a car specifically designed for women, as well as hosting an engineering college. During World War II, she managed 13 factories and was the only woman appointed to the Industrial Panel of the Ministry of Production.

Mary Somerville, Scientist (1780-1872)



Mary Somerville was an outstanding mathematician, astronomer, scientist and successful writer of the Victorian era – in a predominantly male domain. Self-taught and an advocate of female education, she became internationally renowned for her prodigious mathematical talents, her comprehensible writing style no matter the complexity of the subject matter, and her modest personality. Her first work (translated from French) could not have been achieved without great knowledge of the subject; her further works incorporated astronomy, physics, meteorology and geography. She received numerous honours, was one of the first two women elected as honorary members of the Royal Astronomical Society, and was called “the Queen of science” (Morning Post). Somerville College Oxford was named after her.

Elsie Inglis, Doctor (1864-1917)



An internationally respected doctor, a pioneer surgeon and physician, founder of the Scottish Women's Hospitals for Home and Foreign Service, philanthropist and champion of votes for women, Elsie Inglis' dedication to women's medicine has left a lasting legacy. In the unwelcoming male-dominated world of medicine, Elsie Inglis qualified as a physician, established a maternity hospital and midwifery resource centre in Edinburgh, before founding Women's Hospitals in war zones across Europe. Awarded the Serbian Order of the White Eagle (First Class) in 1916, she was described as "A born leader, entirely patriotic and free from self-seeking" (BMJ); Winston Churchill said that she and her staff would "shine forever in history". The Elsie Inglis Memorial Maternity Hospital (1925-1988) was founded in her memory.

Sophia Jex-Blake, Doctor (1840-1912)



Sophia Jex-Blake's tenacity was crucial in gaining a place for women in medicine. Having fallen "desperately in love with medicine", she was refused entry to Harvard because she was a woman and denied entry to the University of Edinburgh because she was the only female candidate; she recruited other women and they gained admission – a pivotal moment – however they suffered at the hands of male students and were effectively barred from graduating. After qualifying as a doctor in Switzerland, she founded a medical practice in Edinburgh, the Edinburgh Hospital and Dispensary for Women and Children (later the Bruntsfield Hospital), the Edinburgh School of Medicine for Women, and lectured in midwifery at the School of Medicine of the Royal Colleges.

Maggie Keswick Jencks, Co-Founder of Maggie's Centres (1941-1995)



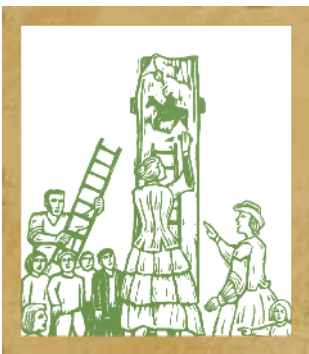
A writer, gardener and designer, Maggie Keswick Jencks designed the blueprint for the "Maggie's Centres" – notable for their architecture and landscape setting, they provide a caring and patient-oriented environment for cancer patients. Now about to number 20, these centres have spread beyond Scotland to the rest of the UK and abroad. Her concern for others and her determination drove her as a generous donor to many charitable causes, but an equally persuasive fund-raiser; with her father, she founded the Holywood Trust (south-west Scotland) and the Keswick Foundation (Hong Kong). Her extraordinary creativity led to her book on Chinese Gardens - a classic on the subject - as well as extensive garden and interior design projects.

Jane Haining, Missionary (1879-1944)



A woman of immense compassion and great courage, Jane Haining was a Church of Scotland missionary and Matron of the Jewish Girls' Home in Budapest. When World War II broke out, she bravely returned to Hungary when on leave in Scotland. Despite repeated orders to return, she refused. After the German invasion of Hungary, she remained – keeping the children safe during four long years of hardship. She was arrested by the Gestapo and sent to Auschwitz, where she died. Jane Haining is one of the only Scots to have lost their lives in the Nazi death camps. She was the only Scot to be honoured at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem as Righteous Among the Nations.

Christian Maclagan, Archaeologist (1811-1901)



Born near Stirling, Christian Maclagan was arguably Scotland's first female archaeologist. She carried out one of the earliest surveys of The Abbey Craig, and investigated the remains of an Iron Age broch in Stirling. Despite her important discoveries, Christian Maclagan was denied full membership of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland because she was a woman. Her work was extensive; and while her ideas seemed eccentric to her contemporaries, her publications preserve valuable records of now-eroded sites. She devoted much of her life to alleviating poverty in Stirling, to clearing slums, and to providing adequate housing. There is a carving dedicated to her in Stirling's Back Walk and an exhibition in the Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum.

Mary Slessor, Missionary (1848-1915)



Mary Slessor was the most celebrated Scottish missionary since David Livingstone who inspired her to a life of service. Determined to overcome the trying circumstances of her youth, and largely self-taught, she combined missionary fervour and a large measure of common sense to work tirelessly to improve the quality of life for native people in Calabar, Nigeria – against a background of prejudice and opposition. Her work spanned healthcare, social welfare and education. Entitled “Mother of all the peoples” in Calabar, she was entirely committed to helping others conquer obstacles in their own lives, at times through unconventional methods. In 1913 the British government awarded her an Honorary Associate of the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem.