

## Bonnie Prince Charlie & The Royal House of Stuart 1688 - 1788

13th September - 17th December 2005

One of the most important collections of Jacobite paintings and works of art is currently on display, all the works come from the renowned Drambuie Collection of Jacobite Art.

The Drambuie collection consists of over 100 works and includes engraved glassware, grand court portraits, miniatures, silver and gold medals and ceramics. All of the works were made by some of the finest craftsmen of the day or commissioned in secrecy by Stuart supporters who wished to restore the exiled Scottish King once again to the throne of Great Britain; a vigil that began in 1688 and lasted for one hundred years. As a result, the works were either small or easy to conceal, or featured symbolic designs and intentionally obscure and allusive inscriptions.

Robin Nicholson, curator of the Drambuie collection, describes the propaganda behind the collection; "These works demonstrate how the Jacobites, in creating an abiding tartan-clad iconography, invented a myth so large that it came to eclipse the reality of their adored leader, 'Bonnie Prince Charlie' while he was still alive".

At the heart of the collection are 58 engraved drinking glasses, created at a time when the art of glass making in Britain was unmatched in the world. The centrepiece of the selection is the Spottiswoode "Amen" Glass (below), c. 1745, which is a form of drinking glass bearing a subversive toast to the exiled king. Despite the unparalleled qualities of the free-hand engraving, the drawn trumpet bowl and the spiral twist stem, this glass was secretly stored in a box in the Spottiswoode House to avoid discovery and subsequent execution from treason.

Leading French and Scottish artists, such as François de Troy and Cosmo Alexander, depicted an idealised Stuart Royal family, emphasising their inherent nobility and Royal status. Jacobite symbols, for example the white rose, were used as a constant reference to the cause. Miniature portraits, such as the matched pair by Antonio David, were commissioned for concealment in jewellery, or under the lid of snuff boxes. Other allegorical pieces in the collection include a lady's fan and a rare Staffordshire teapot.

The Drambuie Liqueur Company acquired this extensive collection over the past twenty years. According to legend, Bonnie Prince Charlie gave the recipe of his favourite drink to the Jacobite MacKinnon clan of Skye, in gratitude for his assistance while on the run before his defeat at Culloden Moor in 1746. Drambuie is still manufactured by the MacKinnons, who reputedly use the original recipe to this day and whose history inspired them to assemble this unique collection.

The exhibition has been touring America and The Fleming Collection is the only planned UK viewing of these works.