

# The Glasgow Boys

14 December – 18 December 2011

The Glasgow Boys shows works by all the principal figures in the loosely-knit band of artists who helped revolutionise British art in the last two decades of the 19th century. They include Sir John Lavery, Sir James Guthrie, Edward Arthur Walton, Arthur Melville, David Gauld, Joseph Crawhall, Edward Atkinson Hornel, George Henry and James Paterson. *The Bridge, Crowland* by Guthrie is a classic example of the first phase of Glasgow School painting as they turned away from traditional 19th century Scottish painting towards a bolder, broader style. The second wave of Glasgow Boys were interested in colour, pattern and texture and among them was David Gauld, whose luminously beautiful *A Breton Village*, painted about 1900, is included in the exhibition.

The exhibition includes ten works from a rarely-seen private collection which belongs to the descendants of Andrew and Jane Gardiner. Mrs Gardiner was Guthrie's aunt and in the 1880s the couple's three sons James, William and Fred were among the strongest supporters of the Glasgow Boys through both direct patronage and indirect encouragement and recommendation. James Gardiner was a constant and enthusiastic collector of works by Guthrie, Crawhall, Walton and Henry, among others. Paintings by these artists which remain in the family's collection will be exhibited in The Glasgow Boys from The Fleming Collection. They will include Guthrie's *Ropewalk Sketch*, Crawhall's *Pigeons in a cage* and Walton's *Farmsteading*.

During the late 19th century Glasgow experienced a remarkable flowering in painting and became the base for the Boys. They came together in an informal group to challenge the pre-eminence of Edinburgh and the Royal Scottish Academy and hated the romantic landscapes and anecdotal genre paintings produced by most Victorian artists. They set out to emulate the naturalism of their French hero Jules Bastien-Lepage and liked to get out into the countryside and paint plein air. However their work stirred up controversy among the traditionalist British public. When they were invited to submit works to an exhibition in Liverpool in 1892 both press and public rounded furiously on paintings which had no obvious story to tell. The city fathers proved more far-sighted and bought pictures which hang in the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool to this day. The Glasgow Boys' influence helped to shape the face of art in Scotland and further afield for many years to come.