

ART APPRECIATION

On Monday 5th September a few members of the Art Appreciation Group made a very early start from Oxenholme to spend the day visiting three exhibitions in Edinburgh.

We arrived at 9.30 am, and after a refreshing coffee, we made our way to the Royal Scottish Academy to view 'A Taste for Impressionism – Modern French Art from Millet to Matisse'. The exhibition focussed on the collections made by forward-thinking 19th/20th century Scottish collectors such as Rachel Beer and Evelyn Fleming and other collectors who invested in, the then new, avant-garde style of art which enabled Scotland to become home to one of the world's greatest collections of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist art. There were paintings by Gauguin, Degas, Millet, Manet as well as other famous French artists. We viewed seven works by Claude Monet from across his career and, for the first time, the full set of Matisse's vibrant *Jazz* prints. The three paintings by Van Gogh included a previously unknown self-portrait. The mysterious image was revealed by an x-ray taken when art conservators examined Van Gogh's *Head of a Peasant Woman* of 1885.

Our next museum was the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art which featured 'Barbara Hepworth – Art and Life'. We had previously covered the 'St Ives Artists' in one of the group's sessions, so to see the sculptures first hand was very impactful, although frustrating as the sculptures invited tactility which, of course, was forbidden. But to perceive the forms in 3-D and to see Hepworth's paintings was a real privilege.

The final museum was at The Queen's Gallery, Palace of Holyrood House to see masterpieces from the Royal Collection at Buckingham Palace. - some of the most treasured Italian, Dutch and Flemish paintings. We viewed Italian paintings from 1520-1640, including a self-portrait by the female artist Artemisia Gentileschi; paintings from the Low Countries - Dutch and Flemish genre scenes, 1630-1680; landscape paintings - The beauty and drama of nature, 1610-1680 and Van Dyck & Rembrandt - two of the best known master artists. To me it was the highlight of the visit to behold the Rembrandt paintings for real – an experience no photograph can portray. We all had a wonderful and enlightening day.

Susan Jones