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Brooch gifted by Mary, Queen of Scots to her close aide and personal hairdresser goes on display



A brooch given by Mary, Queen of Scots to one of her closest lady attendants, who had a particular flair for hairdressing, has gone on display at the Palace of Holyroodhouse for the first time.

Mary Seton was a devoted assistant and friend of Mary, Queen of Scots and lived with her at the Palace from 1561–6. She was one of the four attendants known as the 'Four Marys' who spent many years in France with the exiled Queen. Mary Seton continued to accompany Mary, Queen of Scots during her captivity in England. Sir Francis Knollys, an English courtier charged with the

care of the Queen, noted that Mary Seton 'did set such a curled hair upon the Queen.....every other day she hath a new device of head dressing, without any cost, and yet setteth forth a woman gaily well'.

The brooch dates from c.1580 and is made from enameled gold and studded with pearls and rubies. It can be seen in the Outer Chamber of the Mary, Queen of Scots apartments at the Palace of Holyroodhouse.

Mary, Queen of Scots lived at the Palace following her return from exile in France in 1561. In 1565 she married Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley, in the Palace chapel; just a year later her Italian secretary, David Rizzio, was murdered by Darnley in front of the Queen, in her private apartments.

The private apartments of Mary, Queen of Scots have recently been re-presented as part of a £10 million investment by Royal Collection Trust to enhance the visitor experience at the Palace, including the re-display of the historic spaces to tell the stories of the Palace's famous inhabitants. A royal residence for more than 500 years, the Palace of Holyroodhouse has served as home to both Mary, Queen of Scots and Bonnie Prince Charlie.

Other projects that form part of the investment, collectively called Future Programme, include the creation of a public physic garden and a Learning Centre within the restored Abbey Strand buildings, and new ticketing and welcome spaces.

Sally Goodsir, Assistant Curator of Decorative Arts, Royal Collection Trust, said, 'Through new displays of the Royal Collection our visitors will be able to explore the Palace's close association with some of Scotland's best-known historic figures. We want everyone to gain a deeper understanding of Edinburgh's royal palace and of its continuing role as the official residence of the Sovereign in Scotland.'

For further information and images, please contact the Royal Collection Trust Press Office: +44 (0)20 7839 1377, press@rct.uk.

Notes to Editors

Royal Collection Trust, a department of the Royal Household, is responsible for the care and display of the Royal Collection, and manages the public opening of the official residences of The Queen. Its work is undertaken without public funding of any kind. Income generated from admissions and from associated commercial activities contributes directly to The Royal Collection Trust, a registered charity. The aims of The Trust are the care and conservation of the Royal Collection, and the promotion of access and enjoyment through exhibitions, publications, loans and educational programmes.

The Royal Collection is among the largest and most important art collections in the world, and one of the last great European royal collections to remain intact. It comprises almost all aspects of the fine and decorative arts, and is spread among some 15 royal residences and former residences across the UK, most of which are regularly open to the public. The Royal Collection is held in trust by the Sovereign for her successors and the nation, and is not owned by The Queen as a private individual.

Admission to the Palace of Holyroodhouse is managed by The Royal Collection Trust, a registered charity in England and Wales (1016972) and in Scotland (SCO39772).