Probus talk 27 March 2025

Scotland: The Global History: 1603 to the Present

Professor Murray Pittock

Prof Pittock's most interesting talk explored Scotland's global impact and international connections since the Union of the Crowns in 1603, when King James VI of Scotland also became King James I of England.

Prof Pittock challenged the traditional narrative that Scotland's story is merely a subset of British history.

The talk covered a huge historical span. Key themes included:-

1. Scotland's disproportionate global influence despite its small size
2. The Scottish diaspora and its impact across the world
3. Scotland's intellectual contributions during the Scottish Enlightenment
4. The development of Scottish national identity within and against British imperialism
5. Scotland's economic and cultural relationships throughout the world including Europe, North America and East Asia
6. Scotland maintained its own distinct identity, institutions, and global networks even after political union with England
7. Scotland's role in the British Empire while showing how Scots often operated with their own national interests and connections distinct from broader British imperial projects.
8. Scotland's educational, scientific, and philosophical contributions; the global impact of Scottish literature, and economic developments.

The above themes are explored in much depth in Professor Pittock's book of the same name as the talk.